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SUBSTANTIAL advance has been made in this Volume in the development of the original plan of the *Present Day Series*.

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THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE FOUR PRINCIPAL EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL

BY
F. GODET, D.D.,
Author of

"STUDIES ON THE OLD TESTAMENT;" "STUDIES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT;"
"COMMENTARIES ON THE GOSPELS ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE AND ST. JOHN,
AND THE EPISTLES TO THE ROMANS," ETC.



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Argument of the Tract.

THE Tract is designed to show to those who are not familiar with the subject, or may still be in doubt about it, the grounds on which the most eminent scholars of every school of criticism receive as authentic the Four Principal Epistles ascribed to St. Paul.

Three classes of considerations reviewed—

1. *Comparative*.—In this section the perfect harmony between the Acts of the Apostles and these Epistles is proved by a careful comparison between them.

2. *Historical*.—In this section the history of Christian Literature from the times of the Apostles is adduced for the purpose of proving the existence and rapid dissemination of the Four Epistles in question, and the authority they exercised in the Churches as Apostolic works.

3. *Moral*.—In this section the character of the author, as it comes out in the Epistles, is examined; and it is shown to be utterly incompatible with the numberless frauds which must be imputed to him if the Pauline authorship be denied. The still greater difficulty of believing that they were written by four authors is pointed out. The testimony of various rationalistic writers in favour of the genuineness of the Epistles is quoted.

In conclusion, it is shown, from these Epistles, what the Church thought of Christ twenty-seven years after His death, and even before that date.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE FOUR PRINCIPAL EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL.



CHRISTIAN antiquity has transmitted to us, in the canon of the New Testament, thirteen epistles which bear the name of the Apostle Paul, and a fourteenth, the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is anonymous, has been ascribed to him by a part of the ancient church.

The
Pauline
Epistles.

The
Epistle
to the
Hebrews.

With respect to the first thirteen, it does not seem that any doubt was raised about their authenticity in the first centuries of the Christian era. Different sects rejected this or that book because it did not harmonise with their ideas. But since the revival of criticism, the authorship of several of them, viz., the Epistles to the Thessalonians, the Ephesians, and the Colossians, and the Philippians, as well as the Pastoral Epistles, has been disputed by a certain number of theologians. There are four, however, viz., the Epistle to the Romans, the two to the Corin-

The
authenti-
city
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centuries.

Several
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since the
revival of
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Four
undisputed.

Evanson,
Bruno
Bauer, and
Loman
deemed of
no
importance.

thians, and the Epistle to the Galatians, which have never been questioned by any great representative scholar. Ferdinand Baur, the founder of the most advanced school of criticism, far from rejecting them, has made them the basis of his theory of the historical origin of Christianity. And the objections raised against their authenticity by two or three scholars, determined, it seems, to leave nothing standing (Evanson in England, Bruno Bauer in Germany, A. D. Loman in Holland), have been deemed of so little importance that one of the most advanced scholars of the liberal school has assigned them a place only, as he says, “in the history of criticism”¹

It is to these four *universally accepted* Epistles that we shall now direct our thoughts. We shall consider the grounds of their universal reception in the Christian church as the composition of the Apostle of the Gentiles.

I.

THE OBJECT AND CONTENTS OF THE FOUR EPISTLES.

The
object
of the
Epistle to
the Romans.

THE Epistle to the Romans, which is generally placed at the beginning of the whole collection, was designed to furnish an exposition of the Christian faith to a church which had never

¹ Holtzman, *Einleitung in's Neue Testament*, 1885, p. 224.

been visited by Paul or by any other apostle, and consequently had never received any oral instruction on the subject. As Paul had always been in the habit of giving a continuous exposition of the Gospel in the churches which he founded,¹ he wished, in the Epistle to the Romans, to supply this want with respect to the church of the capital of the world. This appears to us the most natural way of accounting for the general and systematic scope of the Epistle to the Romans. Paul himself reminds them at the commencement that it had not been possible for him up to that time to visit Rome to preach the Gospel, and thus he clears the way for the complete exposition of the Gospel of Christ, “which is the power of God unto salvation.”²

The systematic scope of the Epistle accounted for.

The two Epistles to the Corinthians, which follow that to the Romans in our canonical Scriptures, have quite a different purpose, as might be inferred from the fact that Paul himself founded the church at Corinth, and sojourned two years in that city. He had then given them a complete and exhaustive exposition of the Christian verities. In the first of these Epistles he replied to certain questions concerning the Christian life which had been put to him by

The Epistles to the Corinthians.

Questions discussed in the First Epistle.

¹ Compare especially Acts xix. 9, 10: “Disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.”

² Romans i. 16.

the church at Corinth, and he corrected certain errors that had crept into the private and public lives of these converted heathen. For he had heard of the doings of the Corinthians through other channels than the letters they had written to him.

The purpose of
the Second
Epistle.

The Second Epistle was written with the intention of drawing closer the bonds which united the Apostle to the better portion of the church, bonds which had been seriously loosened through dissension ; then he wished, before he himself went to Corinth, to bring into order a factious minority, which had, for the time being, infused an evil spirit into the community.

The
Epistle to
the
Galatians.

In the Epistle to the Galatians, the Apostle energetically resisted the attempt made by Christians of Jewish origin to bring the church of Galatia under the yoke of Mosaic ceremonies, especially their desire to compel it to adopt circumcision and observe Jewish festivals ; as if Israel only were God's people, and the Gentiles could not be saved through faith in Christ unless they complied with the requirements of the Jewish law. He laid down the bases of evangelical liberty and Christian life.

The
basis of
evangelical
liberty and
Christian
life laid
down.

Our task is to show the grounds on which these four Epistles have been received without hesitation by the church in all ages as the work of the Apostle Paul. For this purpose we shall have to weigh

three classes of considerations: *comparative*, *historical*, and *moral*.

II.

COMPARATIVE CONSIDERATIONS.

By these we understand the relation of these letters to each other, and to other writings of the New Testament, especially to the Acts of the Apostles.

We are aware that doubts have been cast on the truth of the narrative contained in the book of Acts, and we shall not in this Tract extend the bounds of the discussion by undertaking its defence. We only remark in passing that what a certain section of the critics contest is not so much the reality of the facts related in the narrative in the Acts as the light in which these facts are presented. How is it possible to deny the foundation of the Judeo-Christian church by St. Peter at Jerusalem, and the rapid extension of this church in Palestine? How is it possible to deny the fact of the martyrdom of Stephen, and the dispersion of the church, which resulted from it, as well as the foundation of the church at Antioch to which this dispersion gave rise? How can the conversion of young Saul or his three missionary journeys during which he founded the church, first in the southern parts of Asia

The
relation of
these
Epistles
to each
other, and
the other
New
Testament
writings.

The Acts
of the
Apostles.

What
certain
critics
contest
in the Acts
of the
Apostles.

Minor, then in Greece, in Macedonia, and Achaia, and lastly at Ephesus and in the surrounding districts of Asia Minor be called in question? How can his voyage to Rome and the shipwreck related at the close of the Acts be disputed? Without these facts the existence of the church in the world would be like an effect without a cause. We shall have to compare the historical references scattered through the Epistles with the accounts given in the book which has preserved the record of these great events. We take the Epistles in the order of their composition.

The comparison
to be
instituted
between the
Epistles and
Acts.

The state of
affairs
revealed in
the
Epistle
to the
Galatians.

St. Paul's
second visit
to Galatia.

The position of affairs which is revealed in the Epistle to the Galatians, is this: Paul had visited a short time previously the churches of Galatia, and had left them confirmed in the truth of the gospel. This is clear from the words which follow the address of his letter: i. 6, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." These words "*so soon*" imply that the change took place rapidly, during the short time that had elapsed since the last visit of St. Paul and his writing the letter. We may conclude from another passage, that this was Paul's second visit to Galatia, and not the first during which he had founded the church. He wrote to them, iv. 13: "Ye know how, through infirmity of the flesh, I preached the gospel unto you at *the first*."

The Greek term which corresponds to this last word indicates that it was the first of *two*. Now Paul had made three great missionary journeys : the first and least extensive with Barnabas to Cyprus and the south of Asia Minor (Lycaonia and Pisidia); the second, of far greater extent, with Silas and Timothy, in which, after having traversed Asia Minor, he founded the churches of Greece (Macedonia and Achaia); the third, geographically half-way between the two first, in which St. Paul settled at Ephesus, at the western extremity of Asia Minor. He could not have founded the churches of Galatia in the first of these journeys, for he remained with Barnabas in the southern provinces of Asia Minor. It must, therefore, have been in the second journey that he arrived in Galatia for the first time; and in the third that he visited these churches for the second time, immediately before their falling away, for which he reproaches them at the beginning of his Epistle. This appears from the words of St. Paul in Gal. i. 6 and ii. 13, and exactly agrees with the details which St. Luke gives us of the commencement of the second journey in Acts xvi. 1-8, and of the third in Acts xviii. 22, 23.

At the beginning of the account of Paul's second voyage (Acts xvi. 6, R.V.), Luke says, " And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak

His three
missionary
journeys.

His visits to
Galatia.

The
evidence of
the Epistle
in agreement
with the
Acts of the
Apostles.

the Word in Asia, and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not." Then, at the beginning of the narrative of the third voyage, it is said (xviii. 23), "He went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, *strengthening all the disciples.*" The first of these two passages evidently refers to his visit when he founded the church; but he tells us nothing of this event. From Gal. iv. 13, 14 we learn that Paul was at that time detained in Galatia by sickness. The second refers to the visit which immediately preceded the Epistle. We must conclude from the manner in which St. Paul expresses himself that he found the churches already unsettled, but that he succeeded in *confirming* them. The Epistle and the narrative in the Acts are, therefore, in harmony with each other, although the accounts are thoroughly independent of each other.

The
Epistle and
the Acts
of the
Apostles
harmonious
but in-
dependent.

The First
Epistle to
Corinthians
written at
Ephesus.

The account
of Paul's
residence in
Ephesus in
the Acts.

At the time he wrote the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul was at Ephesus, and intended to remain some time there (xvi. 8). This account refers to a period subsequent to that of the Epistle to the Galatians, to the long sojourn in Ephesus during his third missionary journey, and rather towards the end of his stay there, than at the beginning. Now we read in the Acts of the Apostles (xix. and xx.) that Paul passed three years in the countries of which Ephesus was the centre, and that he had

founded a great number of churches. This harmonizes also with the language of Paul at the close of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (xvi. 9), “For a great door and effectual is opened unto me.”

Churches
founded in
the country
round
Ephesus.

More than once in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul mentions that he had sent Timothy into Greece, especially to Corinth (iv. 17; xvi. 10). Now this is what we read in the Acts when the writer is giving an account of the same period (xix. 21, 22): “After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, after I have been there, I must also see Rome. So he *sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus*; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.” This was a solemn moment in the Apostle’s life. The West called him, and he must prepare to leave Asia and Greece. But in order to do that he had measures to take, one in particular which we shall refer to immediately. This was the reason why Paul sent Timothy, his faithful disciple, into Greece. He himself purposed to follow at a later period. The situation described in the Acts is therefore in all points the same as in the First Corinthians, but with such differences in details and expressions that it is impossible to imagine either sketch to have been borrowed from the other.

Allusions
to Timothy’s
mission to
Greece in
the First
Epistle to
the
Corinthians
and in
the Acts.

Agreements
and
differences
between the
two
accounts.

The references to Apollos in the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

The explanation furnished in the Acts of the Apostles.

The undesigned character of the explanation.

The situation presupposed in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, i.-iv., mention is made of a certain teacher, named Apollos, to whom one party was passionately attached, preferring his teaching to that of the Apostle Paul himself. This teacher is again spoken of in chapter xvi. He was with Paul at Ephesus; and Paul said that he had begged him to return to Corinth, and that Apollos had absolutely refused to do so, evidently because Apollos was disgusted with the part his partisans wished him to play in opposition to Paul. All this is naturally explained by the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles at the close of chapter xviii. According to this account this Apollos was a Jew of Alexandria, a powerful and eloquent man who had been brought to the knowledge of the Gospel by Aquila and Priscilla, friends of Paul, living at that time at Ephesus; and after having instructed him more fully, they sent him with letters of recommendation in order that he might in some respects take the Apostle's place in Corinth. The narrative in the Acts furnishes an easy explanation of all that we read in the Epistle to the Corinthians, but without any allusion that could make the reader suspect that it had been written for this purpose.

The situation that is presupposed by the Second Epistle to the Corinthians is this. The Apostle had just passed through a great tribulation in Asia which might even have cost him his life. He had

afterwards set out for Troas, a town situated to the north of Ephesus, and from thence to Macedonia, with the intention of meeting Titus whom he had sent to Corinth (ii. 12, 13). He had at last found him in Macedonia (ch. vii.), and his heart was filled with consolation by the news he brought him of the good feelings entertained by the Corinthians towards him. He now purposed to send him back immediately with this letter, in order to expedite a good work which he had in his mind at this time, to which we shall presently refer. He purposed to follow soon after himself, to make a prolonged sojourn, as he had promised them for some time past. All these details agree with what we read in ch. xix. and xx. of the Acts. The severe tribulation through which the Apostle had passed doubtless refers to the popular rising excited by the silversmith Demetrius, which is described in chapter xix. The beginning of chapter xx. shows us the Apostle setting out immediately after for Macedonia. Then, after a sojourn in that northern province, he goes into Southern Greece, to Corinth, where he remains three whole months (xx. 3). The accounts differ in form, but there is a fundamental agreement between them.

We gather from several details in the Epistle to the Romans that it was during these three months passed in Corinth that Paul wrote this Epistle.

The account of Paul's movements in the Acts of the Apostles.

The fundamental agreement but formal differences in the accounts.

The Epistle to the Romans written at Corinth.

Paul declares in it that he had finished his task as preacher of the Gospel in the East, from Jerusalem to the Adriatic. He had then to seek a new field of labour in the West, and for that purpose to go as far as Spain (ch. xv. 18-24). The three months spent at Corinth, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, are just then the very time of rest, during which this Epistle was written, and the time that divides the ministry of the Apostle into two great portions.

Recommendation of Phœbe of Cenchrea to the Romans.

Church at Cenchrea referred to in the Acts.

Confirmation of the fact that the Epistle to the Romans was written at Corinth.

The strife between the Apostle and the Judaisers.

Paul recommended to the Romans Phœbe, a deaconess of Cenchrea. Cenchrea was the port of Corinth on the west shore of the Ægean Sea, and we are incidentally told in the Acts that there was a church there, where St. Paul had spent some little time (xviii. 18). The narrative in the Acts and the references in the Epistles are thus in perfect harmony with each other in reference to dates as well as places. The fact of the composition of this Epistle at Corinth is elsewhere confirmed by the name of the host of the Apostle, Gaius, one of the oldest converts of the Corinthian church (comp. Rom. xvi. 23, with 1 Cor. i. 14).

We have still two particulars to mention here, which are all the more remarkable because they link these four Epistles closely together, as well as connect them with the narrative in the Acts. We refer first to the development of the strife between the Apostle and his Judaising adversaries.

We find it in Galatia in its first stage. The adversaries from Jerusalem, after passing through Antioch, arrived in Galatia in Asia Minor, and sought to impose on the ignorant people the most painful of their rites, that of circumcision (v. 2; vi. 12).

First stage
in Galatia.

In a more advanced stage, and among a more cultivated people, in Greece, at Corinth, such a thing would not have been possible. The strange teachers who were seeking to use the Mosaic law for their own profit in the Gentile churches founded by St. Paul were clever enough to give a more *spirituel* character to their hostility at Corinth. They made a violent attack on the person of the Apostle, and tried to induce the church to revolt against his authority, and to bring it under the influence of a legal spirit. It was at this point that the strife culminated. The Epistles to the Corinthians emphasise this point.

A more
advanced
stage at
Corinth.

Finally, the calm and masterly exposition of the Epistle to the Romans shows us that the victory was henceforth assured, at least, spiritually. This Epistle is like a trophy erected on the field of battle; the polemical tone has disappeared, the adversary has laid down his arms. We find then very plainly in these four writings the marks of a true history, and can follow the important drama which marks this decisive epoch.

The
Epistle to
the Romans
shows the
spiritual
victory.

The same thing holds good with respect to

The collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

another particular, yet more special. In 1 Corinthians (xvi. 1), the Apostle speaks of a collection he had organised in the different churches for the benefit of the poor saints at Jerusalem. He had already made suitable arrangements for this purpose in the churches of Galatia, which had returned to their allegiance to him after their seducers had been driven away. Paul adds (xvi. 4) that if the collection was successful at Corinth, he himself would accompany the deputies of the churches who were taking it to Jerusalem. This collection is again spoken of more fully in the viii. and ix. chapters of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

Uncertainty as to its success.

We see that Paul is still uncertain as to the success of this work, to which he attaches great importance. While the poor Macedonians had shown themselves generous, the rich Corinthians seemed less disposed to give; it was to stimulate their zeal that he sent Titus to Corinth with this Second Epistle, in order that, when he himself arrived, all might be ready.

The definite result.

In the Epistle to the Romans we find the definite result that accrued from all these efforts. Paul, before going to Rome, has now decided to set out to Jerusalem, in order himself to be the bearer of the collection remitted by the hands of the deputies, chosen by the churches for this purpose (Rom. xv. 25-32). We see how all these accounts scattered through the different Epistles

The various references to the subject in the different Epistles form one whole.

unite to form one harmonious whole. The passage in the Acts (xx. 1-4) confirms in a striking manner the situation revealed in the Epistles. This passage, in fact, gives us a list of the persons who were to accompany Paul from Greece to Jerusalem, and who were all gathered round him at Corinth. For the list contained in the fourth verse can only be the names of those deputies of the churches of whom Paul spoke to the Corinthians (xvi. 3), and who were commissioned to carry to Jerusalem the amount of the collection. Nevertheless Luke enumerates them without even indicating the reason of their being there, so little does he concern himself in his narrative with what is contained in the Epistles.

It is to be noticed that among these deputies he mentions a Sopater of Macedonia. This is probably the same person on whose behalf he salutes the church in the Epistle to the Romans, written at this time from Corinth (xvi. 21).

St. Luke has not thought fit to speak in his narrative of this large collection, which was made at the close of Paul's ministry in the East. This is the more remarkable because he puts into the mouth of the Apostle, when he was pleading before Felix, these words (Acts xxiv. 17): "Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation and offerings." In these few words, which might so easily pass unnoticed, is virtually summarised all

The Epistles confirmed by the Acts of the Apostles.

The deputies to carry the collection to Jerusalem.

St. Luke's reticence as to the collection.

Summary of all that the Epistles to the Corinthians and Romans say of it

that the Epistles to the Corinthians and Romans tell us about this collection. Such a complete and yet unobtrusive an agreement cannot possibly have been a fabrication. I wish to conclude this part of the Tract with two quotations from two of the most distinguished scholars that modern Germany has produced, and who have given more than sufficient proofs of their complete independence of all traditional notions about the sacred books,—words which are like a summary of all the preceding discussion. One quotation is from Schleiermacher, in his ‘Introduction to the New Testament’ (p. 148). It refers to the two Epistles to the Corinthians and at the same time to the 1st Thessalonians.

The conclusion
of Schleier-
macher.

“When we compare several passages in the Acts of the Apostles in chs. xviii., xix., xx., with the personal details which we find at the beginning and end of these Epistles, we can fit into one another the facts deduced from these two kinds of writing (Acts and Epistles) in such a manner that they mutually supplement each other, without either of them ceasing to have its own peculiarity, or the possibility of one having been written to suit the other.”

Ferdinand
Baur on
the Epistles
to the
Corinthians.

The second quotation is from Ferdinand Baur, in the first edition of his well-known work, “The Apostle Paul.” He says, speaking of the two Epistles to the Corinthians (p. 260):—

“The great interest which these two remarkable letters of St. Paul excite, arises from the fact that they carry us more completely than any other writing of the New Testament into

the midst of the living Christian Church in a state of formation, and afford us a view of the circumstances in the midst of which the new life evoked by Christianity assumes its own character."

We may therefore conclude that as the book of Acts furnishes us with a true framework of the ministry of the Apostle, these four Epistles give us materials to fill in the picture; they are like fragments of his heart and life during the course of that agitated period of which they trace for us the affecting incidents. The Epistle to the Galatians gives us an account of the first outburst of the strife; the two Epistles to the Corinthians show us its most acute phase; that to the Romans is the monument of the triumphant issue of it.

The relation
of the Acts
of the
Apostles
to the
undisputed
Epistles of
St. Paul.

III.

HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

THE history of Christian literature, from the period which followed the times of the Apostles, confirms the result to which the study of the New Testament has led us, showing, as it does, by positive evidence the existence and the rapid dissemination of these four Epistles in the Christian communities, as well as the authority they exercised in the churches, as Apostolic writings.

Confirmation from
post-
Apostolic
Christian
literature

St. Paul died between the years A.D. 64 and 67. Some twenty years later, two writings are met with; one dated from Rome towards the end of

Domitian's reign (about the year 95); the other, probably, composed at Alexandria about the same time, according to some a little later, from which we learn the impressions, more or less distinct, which were made on the minds of the authors by the Epistles of the Apostle which we are now considering.

Clement's
Epistle
to the
Corinthians.

The first of these writings is a letter that one of the bishops of the church at Rome, named Clement, was instructed by his church to write to the Corinthian church, in which a kind of ecclesiastical insurrection had arisen against the presbyters appointed by the Apostle, which had caused a great disturbance. The names of the deputies who were appointed to carry this letter are still known. They are Claudius Ephebius and Valerius Bito. There was a third, named Fortunatus, sufficiently clearly distinguished from the others,¹ and who might be the Christian from Corinth who had brought the news to Rome of what was going on in the former city. It is not impossible that it was the same Fortunatus, who, more than thirty years before, had come to visit Paul at Ephesus as a deputy from Corinth (xvi. 10).

Its
indisputable
authenti-
city.

The authenticity of this letter is indisputable. More than half a century later, the Bishop of Corinth, Denys, writing to the Roman bishop, Soter, says to him,

¹ Epistle of Clement, c. 65, 1.

"We have to-day celebrated the holy day of our Lord, and read your letter, and are careful always to re-read it for our correction, as well as the preceding one, written to us by Clement."¹

Thus we see that the letter from Clement was carefully preserved in the archives of the church at Corinth, and was read from time to time for the instruction and reproof of the community. How therefore can its authenticity be doubted, especially if we recall the severe reproofs which are administered to those to whom it is addressed? This letter of Clement from Rome is the most undeniable witness to the authenticity of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. This is, in fact, what the bishop wrote to the Corinthians in this letter (46 and 47) :—

The
preservation
of Clement's
Epistle.

Its
undeniable
testimony
to the
authenticity
of St. Paul's
First Epistle
to the
Corinthians.

"Why have there entered among you rivalries, wrath, dissensions, schisms, and discord? Have we not all one God, and one Christ, and one Spirit of grace shed upon us, and one calling in Christ? Why do we disagree and scatter the members of Christ, and excite schism in the one body, and carry our dissensions to such an extent that we forget we are members one of another? Woe to such a man! It would have been better had he never been born. . . . Your schism has perverted many, discouraged others, caused some to doubt; it has filled us all with sorrow, and yet you persist in your sedition! Refer again to the letter of the blessed Apostle Paul. What did he write to you at the beginning, when the Gospel was first preached to you? Indeed, he himself, under the direction of the Spirit, wrote to you about himself, Cephas, and Apollos, because even then you were full of rivalries. But that dissension was less culpable than the present, for at that time your infatuation concerned the il-

¹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, iv. 31.

lustrious apostles (Paul, Peter) and a man approved by them (Apollos). But now you see who those are that trouble you, and destroy your brotherly love. These things that we have heard are a disgrace to you, and unworthy of Christians, that one or two men should lead the old established church of Corinth to rebel against the elders. And this report has not only reached us, but also others who are strangers to our faith, so that, on account of your folly, the name of the Lord is blasphemed."

The
Pauline
authorship
of the First
Epistle
to the
Corinthians
undisputed
at Rome.

Impossible
to have
been a
forgery.

Thus we see that the Pauline authorship of the First Epistle to the Corinthians was not doubted at Rome any more than it was at Corinth, to which church it was written, for Clement quoted from the text of it when he wrote this passage (compare 1 Cor. i. 12 and iv. 6). Clement reminded the members of the church of it as an Apostolic Epistle in order to humble them. Under these circumstances we cannot see how the most resolute scepticism can deny its authenticity. If we suppose that a forger sent it to the church of Corinth during the lifetime of Paul, how did it happen that he, when he visited this church, did not discover the fraud? And if the letter had been a forgery, and sent to Corinth after his death, would not the Corinthians, before depositing it in their archives, have asked if it were possible that this letter, which only arrived after the death of Paul, could have come from the Apostle, all the more as they were severely reprimanded in it for their vanity, levity, want of wisdom, of love and

of Christian honour? Such a letter would not have been received, and deposited in their archives, unless they had good reason to believe in its genuineness.

We shall not enumerate other passages in which Clement of Rome quoted textually the First Corinthians. There are four principal ones. Then he also uses some expressions in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which prove that he had that Epistle, as well as the First, in his possession at Rome. Let us compare the following words (chap. xxx.), "Let our praise be of God, and not of ourselves," with 1 Cor. iv. 5, and 2 Cor. x. 18, and (chap. xxxvi.), "By Him, Christ, we behold, as in a mirror, His perfect and sublime face," with 2 Cor. iii. 18. The same Clement also uses the Epistle to the Romans. His enumeration of the vices of the heathen (chap. xxxv.) is an evident reproduction, though a free one, of that in Rom. i. 29-32.

"Casting far from us all injustice, iniquity, avarice, disputes, spirit of bitterness, deceit, false reports, evil speaking, hatred of God, pride, and boasting, vain glory, want of hospitality, . . . not only doing these things, but applauding those who do them."

Clement, Bishop of Rome, more than twenty years after the death of Paul, uses his letter to the Romans, which he found in the archives of his church as a true writing of the Apostle, which had authority for him and all Christendom. If

Clement's
other
quotation
from the
First
Epistle
to the
Corinthians,
and
expressions
which show
that he had
the Second
as well as
the First
Epistle
in his
possession.

Clement
uses the
Epistle to
the Romans
as genuine.

we think of the profound interest in evangelical truth which was then felt by the church and its leaders, men ready any day to suffer martyrdom for the Gospel, we shall understand that such confidence on the part of Clement and his church in a writing like the Epistle to the Romans, which expounds fundamentally the truths of the Gospel, must have rested upon what they considered an absolutely immovable foundation.

The second of the writings of which we have spoken is the so-called Epistle of Barnabas. We do not regard it as the work of the well-known companion of St. Paul. It does not bear the name of the author, and presents a conception of Judaism absolutely foreign to what we should conceive to have been regarded as the ideas of the companion of Paul in his work. This Epistle was probably composed at Alexandria, where it was specially well known at the end of the first, or beginning of the second century. It is difficult to believe that the following passage was not borrowed from the Epistle to the Romans, chap. xiii. : “Behold, I have given thee Abraham, as a father to the Gentiles who believed in God, in a state of uncircumcision.” Compare Romans iv. 11. The author also applies to himself St. Paul’s expression, *filth, offscouring*, in imitation of the Apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 11, 13.

These Epistles therefore not only existed at the

The confidence of Clement and his church in the Epistle to the Romans must have rested on an immovable foundation.

The Epistle of Barnabas.

Composed at Alexandria.

Quotation from the Epistle to the Romans.

end of the first century, but they had been already disseminated; they had been communicated by the churches who received them, to other churches who had asked for them. We know from a passage of Irenæus that the Apostolic Epistles were viewed as the property of the church, and deposited as such in the house of one of the elders.

"Every question will be cleared up for him" (the Christian who is in doubt), says this father, in his great work (*Against the Heretics*, iv. 32), "*when he has read attentively the Scriptures, which are kept in the houses of those who are presbyters in the church.*"

To the houses of the elders people had to go for information, and from their houses the Scriptures were fetched when wanted for public worship. Not only were the presbyters or elders, in whose custody the archives of the church were placed, responsible for the safe keeping of the Scriptures, but they also had the power of granting copies to those churches that applied for them. There is a remarkable passage in Tertullian on this point. This father, in writing to the heretic Marcion, who had appropriated the Gospel of Luke, and modified it according to his own ideas, and rejected the three other Gospels, says to him (*Against Marcion*, iv. 5),

"The same authority in the apostolic churches that acknowledges the Gospel of Luke, is also extended to the other Gospels, those of John, Matthew, and Mark, which we possess through and according to them."¹

The Epistles to Romans and Corinthians were already disseminated at the end of the first century

The Scriptures deposited in the houses of the elders.

Copies granted by them to applicants.

Tertullian's testimony.

¹ Per illas et secundum illas,

What
Tertullian
meant.

Tertullian meant to say that if other churches than those in which the original Gospels were deposited possessed these writings, they only came into their possession through the instrumentality of those churches, and according to originals which were deposited in their archives. We understand from this that the copy of any apostolic writing was made by the church which owned the original, and care was taken that this transcription was done accurately. It is just as if they had added at the close, *Exact copy of the original.*

Rapid
propagation
of the
apostolic
writings.

It was in this manner that the apostolic writings were circulated, each church asking for what it did not possess from the church which had the original. This propagation must have taken place very rapidly, especially with respect to these four Epistles. We have just shown that Clement of Rome possessed, at the close of the first century, not only the Epistle to the Romans, but also those to the Corinthians; that the author of the letter of Barnabas in Alexandria possessed those to the Romans and Corinthians. We conclude also, from similar quotations, that Ignatius in Asia Minor, at the commencement of the second century, had in his hands the Epistle to the Romans and the First to the Cerinthians; that Polycarp at the same time used the Epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Galatians. Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, quotes at length the

At the
beginning of
the second
century
Ignatius had
the Epistles
to the
Romans and
Corinthians
in his
possession,
and
Polycarp
used the
Romans,
Corinthians,
and
Galatians.

passage Rom. iii. 11-17 ; the passage 1 Cor. v. 8 of the 1st Corinthians, and probably Gal. iii. 10 and iv. 12. We must not view these quotations as indicating the date of the publication of these writings. They are made to a certain extent accidentally, and were occasioned by the contents of the works which contain them ; they presuppose the existence and authority of the apostolic books from which they are taken.

Justin
Martyr's
quotations
in the
middle of
the second
century.

Contemporaneously with Justin, about A.D. 140, the gnostic Marcion taught at Rome a system according to which there would have been absolute disagreement between the Old and New Testaments. There were, according to him, two Gods, one inferior, who had created the material world and given the Law to the Jews ; the other superior, the God of the Gospel revealed in Jesus Christ, who is all love, while the first knows nothing but justice. In order to support this system, he chose from among the apostolic writings received by the churches, a certain number of books which seemed to him to favour his theses, but from which he was obliged to excise many things that did not agree with his ideas. These books were the Gospel according to Luke, which he greatly mutilated, and ten of St. Paul's Epistles. These were, according to Tertullian and Epiphanius, the four chief Epistles, to the Galatians, the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Romans ; also the two Epistles to the

Marcion's
system.

The
Apostolic
writings
which he
appealed to.

The four
chief
Epistles, etc.

The order adopted by Marcion chronological.

The deeply rooted conviction in Christendom of the Apostolic origin of these writings.

Without this basis Marcion's work would have been a failure.

The Peschito.

The undisputed Epistles a part of it.

Thessalonians, the Epistles to the Laodiceans (our Epistle to the Ephesians¹), to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Philippians. It is evident that this order, especially of the four first, was determined from the chronological point of view. That was the canon that Marcion had instituted in his numerous churches. This fact is of great importance, for it shows how deeply rooted the conviction of the apostolic origin of these writings was in Christendom. Marcion knew that without this basis, which he retained in common with the church at large, his work would be a failure.

Soon after the middle of the second century, we can establish three facts, which prove the diffusion of St. Paul's Epistles and the authority with which they were received even in the most remote churches in the world. A translation of the apostolic writings into the Syriac language, the *Peschito*, was published at this time at the eastern extremity of the church. It was not a private work; it was a translation destined to form the official canon of the Syrian churches. The four Epistles we are considering form a part of it. In the West a

¹ The grounds for believing this Epistle to be wrongly described as addressed to the Ephesians are external and internal. The weight of MS. authority is against the genuineness of the words "at Ephesus" in the first verse. The fact that the Apostle addresses those to whom he wrote as unknown to him, and does not particularise any persons, seems to be against the Ephesian destination of the Epistle.

Latin translation, that which is generally called *Itala*, appeared at the same time, and a similar fact was reproduced at the opposite extremity of the church. Our four Epistles occupy the place of honour in these collections of the Apostolic writings.

The *Itala*
contains
these four
Epistles.

Then we possess a very important document found by the savant Muratori in the Library of Milan, where it is still deposited. It dates from about the year A.D. 160 or 170, and was probably composed in the name of one of the Western churches, which wished to instruct others, touching the Apostolic writings to be read in public worship. In it they are distinguished from other Christian writings which were not entitled to this honour. After having spoken of the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, the author goes on to say:—

The
Muratorian
Canon.

“ As to the Epistles of Paul, they speak for themselves to those who are willing to understand, as to what place they were sent, and for what purpose they were written. Paul especially forbade the Corinthians to indulge in the schism of heresy ; the Galatians to practice circumcision ; he expounded to the Romans the plan of the Scriptures, showing them how Christ is the beginning and end of them,” etc.

Reference
to these
Epistles.

Then follows the complete list of St. Paul’s Epistles. Thus we see that there was not the least doubt either in the East or West as to the Apostolic origin of these Epistles.

Complete
list of
St. Paul’s
Epistles.

We pass over many authors who wrote at this period (second half of the second century), such as Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, who all use the

four chief Epistles, and we confine ourselves to mentioning the three great doctors, who lived in the second and third centuries, Irenæus, in Gaul; Clement of Alexandria, in Egypt; Tertullian, in Western Africa. Up to this time Christian writers had quoted the Apostolic writings, without indicating the title and the author. Henceforth, they adopt, so to speak, a more exact method, they indicate by name the authors, and the sacred writings from which they derive their testimony. Thus Irenæus says, "This is what St. Paul says, writing to the Romans" or, "In the Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul speaks of," or, "For the Apostle in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians," or, "And again in the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul thus speaks." We find the two great contemporaries of Irenæus also quoting expressly and textually.

Thus from one end of the church to the other, a perfect unanimity of sentiment prevailed with respect to the writings we are considering; there was not the whisper of a suspicion about them. And yet we must not suppose that the conscience of the church was slumbering or that the church was lacking in critical faculty. The controversy that existed between the East and the West as to the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, proves how the Church and its teachers had their eyes open upon questions which concerned their faith.

Method of quotation in Irenæus.

The same method adopted by Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian.

The discussion as to the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews shows that the Church was alive to the importance of critical questions.

IV.

MORAL CONSIDERATIONS.

EACH of the four Epistles that we are considering is prefaced by an address in which Paul is designated by name as its author. And not only so, but in all of them frequent allusion is made to the person of the author as the founder of the Church addressed and the Apostle of the Gentiles.

The
personality
of Paul in
the Epistles.

Thus, in the Romans, the writer begins by explaining the reasons why he had not yet been to Rome, the capital of the heathen world, to preach the gospel to them. In ch. ix. 1-3, x. 1, he ex-

The
Epistle to
the Romans.

presses his profound grief, his distress, and his incessant prayers on behalf of the children of Israel ; in xi. 1, he gives himself as an example to prove that Israel has not been entirely rejected, because he, an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, had been made partaker of the Divine salvation.

The
expression
of his
feelings.

At the end of the Epistle he speaks of his intention to go into Spain, and of his expected arrival in Rome ; and, in his greeting to Aquila and Priscilla, he recalls how they were willing to lay down their lives for his sake. In recommending Phœbe, the

His expecta-
tions.

bearer of the letter to them, he mentions with gratitude the care she had taken of him personally. If the letter had been by an impostor, not only

His
gratitude.

would Paul's name at the beginning of the address have been a forgery, but there would have been a refinement of fraud extending through the whole letter.

The Epistles
to the
Corinthians.

His
foundation
of the
Church.

His reasons
for not
accepting
support
from the
Church.

His
testimony.

His labours.

It is the same with the two Epistles to the Corinthians, in which the author identifies himself all through with St. Paul. It was he who baptised the first converts at Corinth, 1 Cor. i. 14-16. When he had founded the church, it had been in fear and trembling (ii. 3). "I have planted," says he, "Apollos watered" (iii. 6). If the Corinthians had ten thousand instructors, he alone was their father in Christ (iv. 15). Some of them were puffed up, as though he would not come to them; but, said he, "I will come shortly" (iv. 18, 19). If it had depended on him, he would have all men to be like himself (vii. 7). He explains at length the reasons why, in concert with Barnabas, he had refused to be supported as the other apostles had been by the churches which he had founded. He praised the church for having kept the ordinances as they had been delivered by him to them (xi. 2). He had transmitted to the Corinthian church the main facts in the life of our Saviour, and he himself had beheld the last appearance of the risen Saviour (xv. 1-8). He, unworthy to be an apostle, had laboured more abundantly than they all (xv. 9, 10). Then he announced his intention of paying them a visit

when he passed through Macedonia, and he described the joy he felt at meeting with the three delegates of the church, whom he specified by name (ch. xvi.)

The Second Epistle is the most personal, if we may so speak, of all the letters of the Apostle. His recent emotions of grief and joy, of fear and hope, his dangers, his deliverances, his love to the church, his sufferings, his consuming labours, the accusations against his character, his explanations of his conduct, his approaching arrival in Corinth, the severity he would display towards the vicious and rebellious, the whole contents of this Epistle,—each verse shows that the letter was written by the Apostle's own hand.

It is the same with the Epistle to the Galatians. Although teaching occupies a proportionately larger place, the personality of St. Paul is constantly apparent. In the first chapter, he speaks of his past life as a Jew; of his conversion through the revelation of the risen Saviour; of the teaching by which he had received from the Saviour *his gospel*; of his sojourn in Arabia, and his return to Damascus; of his first visit to Jerusalem, and the fifteen days he passed in the house of Peter. In the second chapter, he gives an account of his conference with James, Peter, and John, at the conclusion of which these pillars of the Church recognised his apostleship, and ratified his method of

The Second
Epistle to
the
Corinthians
the most
personal.

The letter
written by
the Apostle's
own hand.

The
personality
of the
Apostle in
the Epistle
to the
Galatians.

Contents of
first and
second
chapters.

preaching the Gospel to the heathen, without imposing the Mosaic law on them ; then narrates his personal contest with Peter at Antioch. In the fourth chapter we have the touching accounts of his first sojourn in Galatia, how, when, detained by a painful malady, he was the object of their love, and was received by them as if he had been the Lord himself ; in the sixth chapter we find the allusion that he makes to having written the letter *with his own hand* (v. 11), as well as to the marks of the Lord Jesus which he bare in his body (v. 17). If all these had not been dictated or written by Paul himself, we must admit that they are only the more or less skilful inventions of a forger, who, after the death of Paul, had personated the Apostle and narrated the various events of the Apostle's life, real or imaginary, as having occurred to himself, in order to induce the churches to receive the things he sought to inculcate.

If Paul were not the author the Epistle must have been forged.

The impression of the writer's integrity derived from the Epistle incompatible with the idea of fraud.

But when we calmly meditate on all these writings, and reflect on all the details contained in them, we immediately feel that we are in the presence of a man who is speaking with all the solemnity that a human soul is capable of, and with the most incorruptible integrity. This moral character, which obtrudes itself upon us, is absolutely incompatible with the innumerable frauds which we must impute to the author, on the supposition that he was not St. Paul himself.

Besides, this impossible supposition involves other improbabilities. How can we suppose that after the death of St. Paul, any Christian author whatever would have thought of attributing to his pen chapter vii. of the 2nd Corinthians, in which the Apostle expresses the lively regret he felt at first for the very severe letter he himself had written to the Corinthians, and the feeling of relief he afterwards experienced at seeing the salutary effects it had produced? How can we believe that in the same Epistle a forger would attribute to the Apostle the authorship of two whole chapters (ch. viii. and ix.) to induce the Corinthians to take part in a collection for the benefit of the poor saints at Jerusalem, which would imply that the church was still in existence there, which was not the case, for two or three years before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Christians had retired to Pella, on the other side of Jordan? How can we believe that a forger after Paul's death, could have invented out of his own head all sorts of accusations against the Apostle, to give himself the trouble to refute them in his name? How can we suppose that in the First Corinthians he would devote the whole of one chapter to explaining the reasons why he declined to use his right to being supported by the churches. How can we imagine that a serious writer, such as the author of these Epistles may be supposed to have been, would mention by name,

Other improbabilities involved in the supposition of non-Pauline authorship.

With reference to the Apostle's regret at the severity of the letter he had written to the Corinthians.

With reference to the collection.

With reference to accusations against the Apostle.

With reference to his support by the churches.

With
reference to
his names
of several
persons.

Chloe, Fortunatus, Achaicus, Stephanas, Phœbe, Tertius, if these were not the names of real persons? What interest would there have been to those living in the second century—for that was the time to which the recent school of Loman has relegated the composition of these four letters—in the long dissertation (1 Cor. xii.—xiv.) about the gift of tongues, at a time when there was no longer such a gift in the Church, when it had entirely given place to prophecy and instruction, as it appears from the writing, "*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*," recently discovered, from the writings of Justin Martyr, and in general from the writings of the second century. But how can we believe in the appearance at that time of writings so fresh, so original, so powerful, so genial, so life-like as these four Epistles, when the creative activity of the early times had given place to the simple reproduction of the apostolic ideas, and when the purity of evangelical doctrine had been corrupted by a mixture of legality, as we see from all the leaders of the Church at this period, Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, Papias? The man who could have composed them at such a time would have shone in the ecclesiastical firmament as a star of the first magnitude, and eclipsed by his brilliancy all contemporary writers, and yet we are to believe that he himself remained unknown!

With
reference to
the gift of
tongues.

Difficulties
involved
in the
supposition
that the
Epistles
were
written in
the second
century.

What the
man who
composed
them at that
time must
have been.

To meet all these moral improbabilities, the few

scholars who have contested the authenticity of the Epistles in question, have only one suggestion to offer which has a shade of plausibility in it. They pretend that primitive Christianity, having originated on Jewish soil, could not have been put in opposition to Judaism at so early a date; and consequently that these Epistles of Paul, which show this opposition to Judaism, must have been composed very much later, when Hellenism had already acquired a powerful influence in the Church.

But what would result from this argument? We should be constrained to declare the controversy of Jesus with the Pharisees to be false, to cease to attribute to our Lord such parables as the old garment and the piece of new cloth, of the vine-dresser and others which accentuate the contrast between the Gospel and the legal economy; to treat the death of Christ as a fable, for it is the blood-stained monument of the rupture between the Old Judaism and the New Dispensation. If we look a little closer into it, we shall see that it is the severe attitude of Jesus towards the religion of His time, which cleared the way for the polemics of Paul against Pharisaism and its sophistical interpretation of the law; and if we study the question yet more profoundly, we shall perceive that this strife of Jesus and St. Paul against the false Judaism of their time, was only the continuation of the struggle of the ancient prophets with the legal formalism of

The only plausible explanation of the difficulties involved.

The consequences of this argument

The relation of the severity of Jesus to the polemics of Paul against Pharisaism.

The
eternal
conflict
between
a living
spiritual
life and
religious
materialism.

their own contemporaries. We find over again in this history of the secular conflict between the prophets and Jesus and the Apostles, on the one hand, and the Jewish nation on the other, the symptoms of the eternal conflict between a living spiritual life which seeks after God, and religious materialism which is at the service of Egoism. There is, therefore, no anachronism in placing the composition of these four Epistles at the time in which the Apostle Paul lived.

The
decision of
sceptical
critics on
the authen-
ticity of
these
Epistles.

These reasons are so decisive that the most sceptical critics express themselves with the utmost decision as to the authenticity of these four Epistles.

De Wette.

This is what De Wette says, in his *Introduction to the Books of the New Testament* (123a) :—

“The letters of Paul bear the marks of his powerful genius. The most important of them are raised above all contradiction as to their authenticity ; they form the solid kernel of the Book of the New Testament.”—1845 (2, 1866).

Baur.

Baur says, in his *Apostle Paul*, (i. 8) :—

“Not only has no suspicion of the authenticity of these Epistles ever arisen, but they bear so uncontestedly the seal of the originality of Paul, that one cannot comprehend for what reason critics could raise any objection to them.”

Holtzmann.

Holtzmann (*Einleit. in's N. T.* p. 224) :—

“These four Epistles are the Pauline *Homologoumena* (books universally received) in the modern acceptation of the word. We can realise, with respect to them, the proof of authenticity undertaken by Paley against the freethinkers of his time.”

Weizsaecker (*Apost. Zeitalter*, 1886, p. 190) :— Weizsaecker.

“The letters to the Galatians and the Corinthians are, without doubt, from the hand of the Apostle ; from his hand also came uncontestedly the Epistle to the Romans.”

Lastly, M. Renan, in *The Gospels*, p. 40 and ^{Renan.} 41, thus expresses himself :—

“The Epistles of Paul have an unequalled advantage in this history—that is, their absolute authenticity. No serious doubt has ever been raised of the authenticity of the Epistle to the Galatians, the two Epistles to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Romans.”

In his book entitled *St. Paul* (p. 5), the same writer arranges the Epistles attributed to this Apostle into five classes—1st, the uncontested and uncontested Epistles (our four Epistles) ; 2nd, the certain Epistles, although some objections have been raised to them (First and Second to the Thessalonians and Philippians) ; 3rd, the Epistles of probable authenticity, although there are grave objections to them (Colossians, Philemon) ; 4th, one doubtful Epistle (Ephesians) ; 5th, false Epistles (First and Second Timothy, Titus).

Renan's classification of the Epistles

We see that, in the eyes of this thoroughly sceptical author, to attach any suspicion to the four Epistles which we are considering is a rational and moral impossibility.

Those who fix the date of these Epistles either at the end of the first century, or in the course of the second, have to decide between two alternatives—either they must attribute the four writings to one

The impossibility of suspecting the authorship of the four principal Epistles of St. Paul.

The alternatives.

The difficulty in either case.

The style of these Epistles.

The difficulties of supposing them to be forgeries insuperable.

and the same forger, or they must impute them to several. In either case they meet with a great difficulty in the fact of the perfectly original and creative style which characterises these Epistles. This style is like the mirror of a powerful individuality ; it is concise, fearless, bold, indicating by one word a whole world of ideas, abounding in paradoxical antitheses, arousing the attention by unexpected questions, illustrating the thought by comparisons which are always equivalent to reasons, frequently passing from the most affectionate outbursts to the most biting sarcasm, employing, without a shade of art, all the resources of art ; in a word, completely inimitable. Can any one ascribe to one and the same forger these incomparable writings, which Christian antiquity always attributed to St. Paul ? By attributing these four masterpieces to one and the same man, we make the existence of such an anonymous man of genius in the Church which succeeded the Apostles so much more incomprehensible, and on the other hand, if we attribute them to four different authors, we are obliged to augment the number of writers who have had the rare ability of writing in the same original and inimitable and yet perfectly characteristic style.

V.

CONCLUSION.

WE have just shown that the work of Jesus was historically continued in that of St. Paul in Israel. Before concluding let us reverse the course, and try to retrace our steps from the work of Paul, and especially from the contents of these four Epistles, to the appearance of Jesus on the earth.

St. Paul's
work the
continuation
of the work
of Jesus.

The Apostle wrote about a quarter of a century after the death of the Saviour. What did the Church of that period think of Him in whom it professed to believe? We can gather it from the Epistles of the Apostle, especially where he recalls certain facts in the life of Jesus as known to his readers, and admitted by them. No doubt,—and it has often been remarked,—he does not give very much detail of the history of Jesus in his letters. One reason is, his writings presuppose among his readers the knowledge of the Gospel history, a knowledge upon which the churches were founded. Another is, Paul, not having himself accompanied with the Lord, had no personal reminiscences of the Saviour's life to communicate. But the historic events that we find recalled in these Epistles are sufficient, and by piecing them together, we can to some extent reconstruct the life of Jesus as pourtrayed for us in the Gospels.

The date of
the Epistles.

What the
Church
thought of
Christ at
the time.

Not much
detail of
Christ's
history
given in the
Epistles.

The pre-
supposition
of the
Pauline
Epistles.

Paul not a
companion
of the Lord.

The life of
Jesus in
these
Epistles.

The pre-existence of Jesus.

Jesus existed prior to his Incarnation as Creator of all things (1 Cor. viii. 6). He was divine, and guided Israel in the desert (1 Cor. x. 6).

Truly man.

He emptied Himself of all these divine riches, and became poor for our sakes (2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 6, 7). He was truly man, born of a woman (Rom. v. 15; Gal. iv. 4). He was born a Jew, and descended from the family of David (Rom. i. 3). He was under the Law, and faithfully kept it (Gal. iv. 4; Rom. xv. 8).

Under the law.

He was without sin (2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. viii. 3). He submitted patiently to a life of opprobrium (Rom. xv. 3). He was meek and gentle (2 Cor. x. 1). He died to manifest the justice of God, and to show us what true justice is by bearing our curse (Rom. iii. 25; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13).

The object of His death.

He was really buried (1 Cor. xv. 4). He was raised again the third day by the power of God (1 Cor. xv. 4; Rom. vi. 4).

His burial and resurrection.

He appeared to Peter, to the twelve, to an assembly of five hundred persons, to James (1 Cor. xv. 5-7), and in the last place to Paul himself (ver. 8).

His appearances after His resurrection.

He was invested with the sovereignty of the whole universe of the dead and of the living (Rom. xiv. 8, 9). He lives glorified in heaven in a spiritual body (1 Cor. xv. 42-48). He intercedes for the Church (Rom. viii. 34).

His glorification and intercession.

When the hour comes, he will reappear as King

(1 Cor. xv. 23 ; Rom. xiii. 11-14). He will raise up his people, and give them a body like His own (1 Cor. xv. 23, 48, 49).

His coming again and the resurrection of His people.

He will establish a divine kingdom by beating down all God's enemies, even death itself (1 Cor. xv. 24, 26 ; Rom. viii. 18-28). He will raise all the dead (1 Cor. xv. 22). All men shall appear before His throne to give account (Rom. xv. 10 ; 2 Cor. v. 10).

How He will establish His kingdom.

At the head of the family of the elect, made like unto Himself, He will glorify God the Father (1 Cor. xv. 28 ; Rom. viii. 29).

His glorifying of the Father.

He is for all, as the source of salvation and life, what Adam was as the source of sin and death ; the Second and last Head of humanity (Rom. v. 12, 21 ; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 45-49).

The source of salvation and life.

The plan of the Eternal God in favour of man is thus fulfilled in Him (Rom. viii. 29, 30 ; 1 Cor. ii. 7).

The plan of God fulfilled in Him.

That is what the Church thought of Christ twenty-seven years after His death ; that is what was thought of Him at an earlier period still—for Paul did not give these facts concerning the life of Jesus, as his own discovery, but as that which he himself had received (1 Cor. xv. 3). That which he especially calls *his gospel* bears on one particular point, the free gift and the universality of salvation. His knowledge of the historical person of Christ in the past, and of His coming in the future, he shared

Paul had received these facts.

The peculiarity of Paul's Gospel.

The Gospel
common
to all the
Apostles.

What Christ
must have
been judging
from the
impression
He
made and
the
testimony
of Paul.

in common with the other apostles (1 Cor. xv. 3, 11). In this general sense, the Gospel is not his own, but that of the twelve. It is not a mere legend, it is the Gospel proclaimed at and after Pentecost.

What must not He have been, who, after two years and a half of public ministry and intercourse with His own, in parting from them, left on their minds such an impression, such an image of His person ! What must not He have been, to have obtained, so soon after His death, from the most desperate of His adversaries, such a testimony as we find in these four Epistles !



MORAL DIFFICULTIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

BY

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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

DIFFICULTIES are to be expected in Revelation as much as in Nature. Intellectual difficulties ought not to surprise us, but the solution of moral difficulties must be attempted. The necessity of honesty and reverence in judging the statements of the Bible is insisted on. Moral difficulties are shown to mean either apparent discrepancies in the teaching of the Bible, or between some Scriptural representations of God's character and dealings, and the judgment of an enlightened conscience. An enlightened conscience is shown to be one educated up to the standard of truth, virtue, and goodness, presented in the character and teaching of Jesus Christ. The effect of finding discrepancies inexplicable is indicated, and the relations of the Divine and human elements in Scripture are stated. Select examples of difficulties are examined and the solution offered : viz., the sin and sentence of our First Parents, the Deluge, the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, the slaughter of heathen nations, the trial of Abraham's faith, and the imprecatory Psalms.

Concerning the Fall, it is pointed out that similar difficulties meet us in every-day life. Concerning the Deluge and the Cities of the Plain, the moral condition of the people and the great natural calamities that are not infrequent, are pointed out. Concerning the slaughter of heathen nations, Israel is shown to have acted as ministers of Divine justice. Concerning Abraham's trial, the Divine command contained nothing at variance with Abraham's conscience, nor with the prevailing ideas of morality. It was a test which Abraham stood. Concerning the imprecatory Psalms, the writers were inspired prophets with prophetic authority, and not actuated by private malignity. They are shown to harmonise with Christ's own teaching. The history and character of David and other cases are examined. The inseparable connection as to inspiration and authority of the Old and New Testaments is vindicated.

MORAL DIFFICULTIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

I.

OF THE ROOM FOR SUCH AN INQUIRY ; AND THE SPIRIT IN WHICH IT MUST BE UNDER-TAKEN.

DIFFICULTIES in the Bible need not surprise us. On the contrary, the more convinced we are of its Divine authorship, the more we must expect to find in its depths we cannot sound, a range we cannot compass, darkness we cannot penetrate. If the Scriptures be a mere collection of human compositions, we may fairly expect to get to the back of them, and to the bottom of them, and in due time to rise to a height commanding a wider outlook, and outgrow their teaching. But if they be God's work in a sense which sets them apart from all human writings, we may reasonably look to find in them, as in God's works of nature, problems which tax or even defy all our wisdom and ingenuity to solve.

Difficulties
to be
looked for
in Scripture.

There are
difficulties
in nature.

Intellectual difficulties ought not to trouble us.

Mere intellectual difficulties not only ought not to surprise, they need not trouble us. The great Apostle of the Gentiles tells us that even he knew but in part, and prophesied in part. We see as in a mirror dimly. If the light suffice for practical guidance, we can afford to wait for perfect light till we have perfect eye-sight.

Moral difficulties must be solved.

The case is otherwise with *moral* difficulties, because they have a practical bearing on our use and estimate of the Scriptures. We are constrained to attempt to solve them. By "*moral difficulties*" we mean any such representations of the character and dealings of God as we are at a loss to reconcile with perfect rectitude, wisdom, and love. Now, the supposition that the character of God actually falls short of absolute excellence, or that His wisdom is fallible, is not only intolerable, striking at the very root of religion, but to a sane and virtuous mind inconceivable. For it is a moral absurdity to suppose that creatures morally as well as intellectually imperfect and infirm, as we know ourselves to be, should be able to frame a standard of goodness superior to that actually possessed by the Infinite and Eternal Creator. The mirror cannot outshine the sun. The stream cannot rise higher than its source.¹

Imperfection in God inconceivable to a sane and virtuous mind.

¹ An Atheist or Agnostic may reply that he does not admit this absurdity, because he denies the existence of the Creator, or at all events the possibility of knowing anything about Him. True, but irrelevant, because the very question of moral diffi-

There remain two other possible alternatives—either that the record ascribing to God what an enlightened conscience condemns is erroneous, or that we have misinterpreted the record or misjudged the facts. Before either the Christian allows his faith to be shaken or the sceptic seizes the former of these alternatives as a weapon of assault, he should consider whether the second alternative is not, to say the least, equally probable. For, although conscience, as the voice within which approves the right and condemns the wrong, is (as Bishop Butler teaches) supreme—an echo in our nature of God's own voice—yet nothing is more common than for conscience to pass mistaken sentences, condemning what it should approve and approving what it should condemn. The more conscientious we are, the more certain we shall be to judge wrongly if we be not in possession of all the facts and of right rules to apply to them. This is true alike of our own conduct, of the conduct of others, and of the dealings of God.

Two qualities are indispensable if our judgment of the statements of the Bible is to have any real moral value—*reverence and honesty*. Reverence is

Alternative explanations of moral difficulties.

Conscience may be mistaken.

Reverence and honesty needed for impartially judging Bible statements.

culties in the Bible assumes the existence of God, and the possibility of our forming a judgment concerning His character and dealings. And the absurdity lies in supposing that any idea we can form of God is superior to *what He really is*.

The character and influence of the Bible.

The manifold testimony to the Bible.

The opposition to the Bible.

The tenacity of the Bible.

indeed reckoned superfluous by some who pride themselves on their honesty. In their view, irreverence serves both for logic and for wit. But consider what it is we are dealing with. On the lowest view that can intelligently be taken of those writings which collectively we name "THE BIBLE," they are the most venerable, wonderful, and indestructible monument of human thought, passion, and life. Human life is seen in them rising to the highest level ever reached of moral heroism, purity, love, faith, self-sacrifice. They have exerted and continue to exert an influence altogether unrivalled on human character and history. An immense array of testimony, stretching through thousands of years, unrestrained by any bounds of nationality, class, mental calibre, or circumstance, bears witness that these writings contain a spring of power and purity and a fountain of consolation undiscoverable elsewhere. Stupendous learning, indomitable industry, brilliant ability, have been expended for the last hundred years on the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, with the aim to disintegrate the Bible, and reduce it to a heap of incoherent fragments. Yet, in spite of their obvious and wonderful diversity of authorship, date, style, and matter, these writings cling together with immortal tenacity as a living whole, and in that character are daily becoming classic in new languages. Beyond all

this, a countless multitude of earnest thoughtful minds in every age, including some of the noblest intellects and choicest spirits, have persisted in ascribing to these writings a Divine authorship such as no other writings can claim, constituting the greatest treasure our race can possess—the authentic declaration of the mind and will of God.

The
recognition
of the
unique
Divine
authorship
of the
Bible.

Any but a coarse and vulgar mind must discern in all this an unquestionable claim on our reverence. To deal with these venerable documents flippantly and scornfully, to attempt to fling around them an atmosphere of ridicule or disgust, betrays either an inhuman levity or a moral and intellectual obliquity—a mental squint—against which argument is powerless. You cannot logically refute a grimace or an indecency.

Argument
powerless
against the
moral and
intellectual
obliquity of
those who
ridicule the
claim of the
Bible on our
reverence.

Reverence itself demands the most thorough-going honesty in dealing with these sacred Scriptures. We shall not honour them, but the reverse, by making them say what they do not say; by hiding or explaining away any portion of their true meaning; or by pretending to think otherwise of them than we really do think. This thorough honesty is equally binding on the sceptic and on the Christian. Honest scepticism is no more compatible with the attitude of a hostile counsel, bent on making out a case against the Bible, than honest faith with the determination to

Honest
dealing
with the
Bible de-
manded by
reverence.

The Christian cannot affect impartiality with reference to the Bible.

see nothing which does not make for our own view of Scripture. At the same time, while the sceptic is bound to keep a check on his hostile feeling, just because hostile feeling almost always prevents fair judgment, the Christian is not bound to suppress his love to the Bible, or to affect an impossible impartiality; first, because the influence of the Bible on his own life, from which that love springs, is an important part of the evidence in support of the claims of the Bible; secondly, because though love may blind, it likewise opens the eyes. Moral and spiritual truth, like that outward beauty which is its type, can be discerned only by the eye of love.

The eye of love alone can discern moral and spiritual truth.

II.

METHOD OF INQUIRY.

How the moral difficulties of the Old Testament should be set forth.

ASSUMING as a common ground for an inquiry concerning *Moral Difficulties in the Old Testament Scriptures* the plain maxims above laid down, we may safely infer as to the method of such inquiry that it is neither necessary nor expedient to array these difficulties in the painfully offensive shape in which professed—not to say professional—assailants of Christianity are wont to exhibit them. Let a man be bent on making out a case, and he will make it out to his own satisfaction, be the facts what they may. Let anyone hunt through the Bible for difficulties, averting his attention

from the grandeur, purity, benevolence, and tenderness of its teaching as a whole, and he will find what he seeks, and will miss all which, had he sought it as keenly, he might have found.

It is not to the sceptic alone that these difficulties offer themselves. The candid and thoughtful believer is no less aware of them. Only ignorance can permit any assailant of Scripture to suppose that he is advancing anything new and unheard of. Age after age, times without number, the same objections have been stated, discussed, and more or less satisfactorily disposed of. Thoughtful and devout students of Scripture would not fail to perceive them, though sceptics were silent. Many a one has fought and prayed his way out of them, through doubt and anguish. Many a one has carried them as a burden in silence, never clearly seeing the solution, but feeling doubt overborne by the blessed certainty that God's Word is "a light to the path, and a lamp to the feet." An experience as proof against doubt, as the rock against the surges, assures them that the words of Jesus are "spirit and life." The dark spectre of doubt vanishes in the sunshine of the Living Saviour's presence, and their heart makes answer, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life!"

This, let us not hesitate to say, is a wise and honest conclusion. A real Christian may be ex-

The
candid and
thoughtful
believer is
aware of the
difficulties.

The
burden
of the
difficulties
borne often
in silence.

The Living
Saviour's
presence
banishes
doubt.

The real Christian more sensitive to moral difficulties than the sceptic.

The solidity and practical value of truth.

Moral difficulties occupy but a small place in the Bible.

pected to be not less, but more sensitive than a sceptic to moral difficulties in the Bible, because the more thoroughly conscience is educated into accord with the standard of moral perfection given in the character and teaching of Christ, the more painfully alive it will be to whatever seems to disagree with that standard. But to occupy one's self with difficulties to the neglect of positive evidence is morbid. Doubt is unsubstantial, and leads to nothing. Truth is solid, and proves its worth by its practical results. Feathers may be heaped in the balance till they outweigh gold ; but, after all, gold is gold, and feathers are but feathers, which a puff of wind will scatter. As a brave man, when once the path of duty and honour is plain, allows no difficulties to deter him, so a wise and humble man, when truth shines clear, will allow no darkness on this hand or that to avert his gaze. While we deal honestly as well as reverently with these difficulties, just because they are in the Bible, let us never forget that such difficulties do not compose the Bible. They occupy but a small place in it. The general strain, progressive unity, moral excellence of its teaching, taken as a whole, are unaffected. It is just because they seem to jar with this strain, this unity, this excellence, that they are difficulties. Anywhere out of the Bible they would give us no trouble.

For, to come back to our starting-point, what

do we mean by *moral difficulties in Scripture*? We mean either (1) apparent discrepancies in the teaching of the Bible—self-contradictions; or (2) apparent discrepancy between some Scriptural representations of God's dealings or character, and the judgment of an enlightened conscience. Practically these two definitions coincide. For what is *an enlightened conscience*? It is a conscience educated up to the standard of truth, virtue, and goodness presented in the character and teaching of JESUS CHRIST. You cannot go beyond that. By denying Divine law and human responsibility you may remove the basis of morals. By explaining conscience as mere collective hereditary judgment and feeling, moulded by utility, you may reduce Ethics to a branch of Physiology. But if it be granted that virtue, duty, and justice are supreme realities based on Divine law, then no higher expression of this law is possible than that given in the teaching of Jesus Christ: perfect love to God, and unselfish love to our fellow-men. His life and character exhibit perfect obedience to this law—obedience which stood the crowning test of self-sacrifice. Therefore we have here our criterion of morality. An enlightened conscience is a conscience in harmony with the mind of Jesus Christ.¹

What is
meant by
moral
difficulties
in Scripture.

What is an
enlightened
conscience?

The
teaching of
Jesus Christ
the highest
expression
of Divine
law.

Perfect
obedience
to this law
exhibited in
His life and
character.

¹ "Nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue, from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ

Man's
moral and
spiritual
ideal
revealed
in Christ.

The character, life, and work of Jesus are a revelation of human nature—of man's moral and spiritual ideal. But this is only half the truth, and the inferior half. They are a revelation of God. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” “Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” Jesus did not hesitate to say, “He that hath seen ME hath seen THE FATHER.” The former of these two positions—namely, that in Jesus Christ we have a perfect moral criterion—modern scepticism, through the voices of its most distinguished representatives, to a good extent concedes. The second position—to wit, that in Jesus Christ we have both the Revealer of God and a personal revelation of God—scepticism, of course, denies, else it would cease to be scepticism. But no system of sceptical philosophy can furnish any substitute for the basis of morality thus provided. No system of sceptical philosophy can furnish an adequate type of virtue or ground of duty. To some extent such a system

Modern
scepticism
to a good
extent con-
cedes this.

Christ the
Revealer
and
revelation of
God
denied by
scepticism.

Scepticism
can furnish
no substitute
for this
basis of
morality.

would approve our life.” (J. Stuart Mill.) “The teachings of Jesus carried morality to the sublimest point attained, or even attainable, by humanity.” (*Supernatural Religion.*) See the chapter on “Jesus Christ” in the Rev. John Fordyce's suggestive and able book, *Aspects of Scepticism*, pp. 234-245, and references there given. (Elliot Stock, 1883.)

may adopt the Christian rule of right; but the more important half of the rule is cut away by omitting love to God, and a mutilated fragment put in place of the living whole.¹

Taking our stand on these two indispensable assumptions, we find ourselves able to look the whole question of these Biblical difficulties full in the face, and to reckon what is the worst that could befall if we found them insoluble. The essential point, we have seen, lies here—that certain Scriptural representations seem in conflict with the judgment of an enlightened conscience—in other words, with the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Now, suppose these particular discrepancies appear incapable of explanation, or even that we were convinced that they are not merely apparent, but real, what is the worst that could happen? The worst that could happen would be that we should be compelled so to limit and lower our idea of the inspiration of Scripture, or of particular portions of Scripture, as to allow a large margin for human error and ignorance in that which is the very essence and substance of the Bible—the record of God's revelation of Himself

The worst that could happen should the difficulties prove to be insoluble.

Allowance would have to be made for human error and ignorance as to the substance of the Bible.

¹ "Ethics, or the science of morals, presents three fundamental problems, answering to the three great ideas of Virtue, Duty, and Justice, or Right. (1) What is the standard of moral perfection? (2) What is the ground of moral obligation? (3) What is the rule of right and wrong?" (*Basis of Faith*, p. 333, 2nd edition).

Low and grudging views of inspiration suck the life-blood of theology.

The general tenor of Bible teaching would not be affected by the necessity of making larger allowances for human error and ignorance.

The Divine and human elements in Scripture would be in discord.

to man. This would be an immense loss. Low and grudging views of the inspiration of Scripture (however disguised under high-sounding names) suck the very life-blood of theology. But this loss, serious though it be, would be something very different from a shipwreck of faith. It would afford no real triumph to scepticism. It would not affect the general tenor of Bible teaching, or disturb a single Bible doctrine. It would not alter the great fact, which is what the honest sceptic is bound to face, that the Jewish Scriptures, as a whole, do present a record of a progressive revelation of the One Living and True God in human history and experience, to which all other human literature furnishes no counterpart, and of which Christianity as set forth in the New Testament is the needed completion and sole explanation.

Although this is so, the loss, as we have admitted, would be incalculably great. For it would amount to this, that *the Divine and the human elements in Scripture* would be seen to be not in harmony, but in discord. What do we mean by "*the human element in Scripture?*" We mean all that exhibits the personal experience and character of the several writers, and reflects the tone, the colouring, the limitations of their circumstances, nation, or age of the world. Theologians of former days, absorbed in the study of the spiritual contents of Scripture, sometimes ignored

this element. But it is real, and therefore cannot be ignored without peril and loss. Modern Biblical scholars and critics have rendered immense service by the flood of light they have thrown on this aspect of the Bible. But the one-sidedness of human nature perpetually robs us with one hand while enriching us with the other. Hence a strong tendency to magnify the human element of revelation at the expense of the Divine. The one is supposed to limit the other; so that the more human the Scriptures are, the less Divine they must be.

The
tendency to
magnify
the human
element of
the Bible at
the expense
of the
Divine.

The true view (I venture to assert) is the exact reverse. The Divine element of revelation penetrates and animates the human as the spirit the body. No barrier line can be drawn on opposite sides of which they limit each other. They coincide. If we are to speak of limitation, it is such as the marble offers to the sculptor, or canvas and colours to the painter. These are the material conditions of the artist's work. You cannot say, '*This* is marble, and *that* is the sculptor's thought, the ideal beauty; *here* is paint laid on with a brush, and *there* is the river, the mountain, the glow of dawn or sunset.' The marble breathes; the canvas mirrors nature. Even so the fulness and vividness of human experience and character in the Bible spring from the same source from which human life itself springs. The Scriptures

The
Divine
element
penetrates
the human.

The
human
character of
the Bible
springs from
the same
source as
human life
does.

The
Scriptures
most human
because
Divine.

are the most human of all writings just because they are Divine.

III.

FIRST EXAMPLE: SIN AND SENTENCE OF OUR FIRST PARENTS.

Difficulties
in the first
three
chapters of
Genesis.

The
allegorical
explan-
ation does
not meet
them.

Assuming
the
allegorical
explanation
the moral
and
spiritual
meaning
would be
the same
as the
historical.

THE account given in the first three chapters of Genesis of the moral standing, the sin, and the sentence of the parents of the human race presents to many minds a whole cluster of difficulties, which the drift of modern thought tends not to lessen, but to aggravate. These difficulties are not removed by the supposition (one of many modern revivals of antiquity), which has found favour of late years, that the account is an allegory. Suppose it to be so. In that case the most ancient portion of Scripture is singularly at variance with the Divine method of teaching exhibited in the Bible as a whole.¹ Nevertheless, the moral and spiritual meaning of the allegory must be the same as of the history taken literally. Man was endowed with a moral nature in which sin had no place. He was created in God's image. He sinned. The

¹ "I do not undervalue legends. They contain man's attempts to feel after God's ideas; they bear witness that no idea can be presented to us without some vesture. But the vesture of God's own ideas must be facts. If He reveals His ideas to us, the revelation must be through facts. I accept the revelation recorded in the Scripture as a revelation of the Divine mind through facts." (F. D. Maurice, *Life*, II. 411.)

first sin was just what all sin is to which conscience attaches the sense of guilt or blame-worthiness—deliberate violation of known duty. It came under St. John's definition of sin (1 John iii. 4.) It was disobedience to God's positive command. It was a breach of that “ law written in the heart ” (Rom. ii. 15), that moral constitution of his nature in virtue of which man is man, and not merely an intellectual animal. Assuming that there is allegory, this is plainly its meaning.

The character of the first sin.

No less plain is the character of the temptation, whatever interpretation any one may see fit to put on the Tree, the Serpent, the eating of the Forbidden Fruit. It was a temptation not from within man's own nature, but from without ; first, to doubt God's goodness in limiting the gratification of desire ; secondly, to doubt God's truth in threatening punishment ; thirdly, to defy God's displeasure and risk the consequences for the sake of supposed gain (Gen. iii. 1-5). Combine with these motives the allurements of sense (v. 6), and you have here the main elements of sin as in all ages it has seduced and ruined mankind—self-will, pride, disobedience, unbelief, unrestrained appetite. Some chief forms of sin, as malice, falsehood, violence, are absent. But experience proves that the germs of all sin are planted when ungodliness and unbelief master the soul, and the balance is destroyed between sense and faith, pleasure and conscience,

The character of the temptation.

The main elements of universal sin present in the first sin.

The germs of all sin implanted with unbelief,

The spiritual significance of the fall summed up by St. Paul.

self-will and duty. St. Paul sums up the spiritual significance of the narrative in the brief but terrible words, "By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin."

Temptation is a fact which bulks largely in human experience. A large proportion of the sins committed every day are committed under strong temptation.

Sin and death are here. Can any more reasonable account be given of this fact than this venerable narrative supplies? Modern science promptly answers that death at all events was here long before man appeared on the earth. It is as old as life. Animals die as vegetables die, by the law of their being. Death is the very platform of life; a benevolent provision by which, at a small cost of suffering, room is made for an ever-fresh succession of living creatures, and an enormous wealth of life and happiness. True. Nothing in these facts contradicts the account in Genesis, in which, if there be any reference at all to the death of the lower creatures, it is implied in the warning to Adam that if he disobeyed he would die, even as "the beasts that perish."

Death in man's case.

Death means something very different in man's case. To the lower creatures the natural decay which dulls consciousness, or the swift fate, not unattended with merciful provisions for paralyzing the sense of pain, which forestals decay, casts no

terrific shadow before, leaves behind no track of desolation in bleeding hearts, blasted hopes, schemes for a long, fruitful future brought to nought, ruined homes, and widespread loss and sorrow. In man's case death is no benevolent provision, ministering to the nourishment of life. It is sheer waste. It is "the last enemy." It would be absurd to speak of the death of animals as 'punishment.' Can we deny that as it affects man it bears every character of penalty? So much so that in all ages and nations the supreme prerogative of government has been the infliction of death as the highest penalty of broken law.

So far we meet with no real difficulty, unless simplicity be a difficulty. The profoundest moral questions are presented in these chapters of Genesis in a form so simple that a child's mind takes them in, unconscious of their magnitude and mystery.¹ The difficulties meet us when we consider the results of this transgression, first to the transgressors, then to their offspring, the human race. The familiar theological phrase, "*The Fall of Man,*" is not found in Scripture; but it simply summarises the Scripture representation, as St. Paul does when he says, "*By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin.*" The fact that the offspring of

¹ See Principal Tulloch's remarks on the superiority of the view of sin taught in Genesis over the highest heathen teaching, in his *Croall Lecture*, close of Lect. I., and beginning of Lect. II.

In man's
case death
is a penalty.

Difficulties
arise from
the results
of trans-
gression
as affecting
Adam's
offspring
and the
human race.

Genesis implies that Adam's offspring were involved in his sin.

Adam were involved in his sin is not expressed in Genesis ; but it is implied, first, in the declaration that Adam begat a son “in his own image ;” secondly, in the fact that “it is appointed unto men once to die ;” thirdly, in the early and universal prevalence of crime.¹

The widely-accepted doctrine of Evolution—under which name, indeed, very diverse theories may be meant—is supposed by many thoughtful persons to have overthrown the Bible doctrines of the lapse of human nature from a state of innocence to one of sin. A highly-imaginative theory has for many minds a far more powerful attraction than a plain historic statement. With any *Atheistic* doctrine of Evolution we are not here concerned. But Evolution may be supposed *the Divine method of creation*. In that case the hypothesis may conceivably be applied to man's bodily or animal nature without any denial of the religious teaching of Genesis. But if it be attempted to apply it to his moral and spiritual nature, a flat contradiction at once emerges. The declaration of Scripture is that the First Parents of the present race of mankind were created “*in the image of God*,” which can mean nothing less than a sinless (though as yet uneducated and inexperienced) moral nature. The hypothesis that primitive men were immoral savages, in whose descendants conscience and

Evolution applied to man's bodily or animal nature.

The attempt to apply it to his moral and spiritual nature.

¹ See Gen. vi. 1-13.

social instincts were gradually developed, involves a bundle of moral paradoxes immensely surpassing any difficulties to be found in the Bible. We must believe that men learned to approve and love virtue by the experience of every vice ; that the faculty of doing right sprung from the practice of doing wrong ; and that God's moral law was not binding on His human children till they had learned to fulfil it. Such hypotheses contradict not merely Genesis, but human nature.

Coming back, then, to the account as it stands on the opening pages of the Bible, there is one question of primary importance. It is this, Do we find in this account of the first entrance of sin and death into our world (the world not of animal and vegetable, but of human life) *any moral difficulty which does not meet us equally in daily experience?* Because, if not, whether such difficulties are soluble or insoluble, they present no argument against either the truth or the inspiration of the narrative.

Now, as matter of unquestionable fact (explain it or not as we may), every day's experience shows us the young, the innocent, the inexperienced, placed in circumstances in which their safety and happiness for life depend on loyalty to duty and virtue. We see them assailed and entrapped by tempters as subtle and malignant as the serpent of Eden, often with temptations substantially identical,

The difficulties of the supposition that primitive men were immoral savages.

No moral difficulty in the account of the fall which does not meet us in daily experience.

The young, the innocent, the inexperienced, daily subjected to temptation.

to the same sins—disobedience to known law, disbelief of God's goodness and truth, defiance of His displeasure, unbridled self-indulgence and self-will. Instances could only too easily be adduced in which a single departure from virtue, under the influence of strong temptation, has been the irreparable ruin of character, happiness, life, and has been swiftly followed by death in one or other of its most ghastly forms. The hospital, the madhouse, the scaffold, suicide, have each its own terrible tale to tell.

These, it may be objected are examples of the *consequences*, not the *penalties*, of sin. For that very reason, because they are links in the awful chain of cause and effect (whether physical or moral), they announce themselves as Divinely-ordained penalties. The links of that chain are welded by the Creator's own hand. Terrible as the penalties are, the law which they fence and enforce is yet unchallengeably the law of LOVE—of far-seeing, all-embracing, infinite benevolence. The standing proof of this is that *if from to-day every human being began to keep God's whole law perfectly*, notwithstanding the dark heritage of all these thousands of years, one generation would suffice to turn earth into a paradise far surpassing Eden.

Instances
of the
disastrous
results of
single
departure
from virtue
under strong
temptation.

Divinely-
ordained
penalties of
sin.

IV.

SECOND EXAMPLE : SEVERITY OF DIVINE JUDGMENTS, ESPECIALLY IN THE CASES (*a*) OF THE DELUGE ; (*b*) OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH ; (*c*) OF THE MIDIANITES AND CANAANITES.

CERTAIN great axioms we must assume as the landmarks of our reasoning. We can no more allow ourselves to doubt that our Creator is perfectly benevolent and perfectly just than that He is all-wise and almighty. Either doubt would be equivalent to practical atheism. His justice can be no more at variance with His love than His power with His wisdom. The unity and perfection of all Divine attributes is summed up in those two great statements : "God is Light ;" "God is Love." Furthermore, we must understand love and righteousness in God to mean substantially the same thing with love and righteousness in man, only free from all limitation and defect. Otherwise, neither objections nor replies have any meaning.

The difficulty we are now concerned with is the occurrence in Scripture of either records of God's dealings with men, or representations of His character, which to many minds appear irreconcileable with these foundation-truths of religion. This is the case when the punishment

The Creator perfectly benevolent and just as well as almighty.

Divine love and righteousness mean the same thing as in man, only free from all limitation and defect.

Scripture instances seemingly at variance with the foundation truths of religion.

The historical reality of the Deluge not in question.

Deluges, tidal-waves, etc., not uncommon.

Buried cities.

recorded as inflicted on sin seems to us in excess either of what justice required or of what goodness could permit. Three leading instances may well stand for all the rest, namely (1) The Deluge ; (2) the destruction of the Cities of the Plain ; (3) the slaughter of the Canaanites and Midianites. These (especially the last) present grave difficulties to not a few devout readers of the Bible who are by no means on the look-out for stumbling-blocks, but supremely desirous of truth.

(1) **THE DELUGE.**¹ On the principles already laid down, we are not concerned in this inquiry with the historical reality of the Deluge. We take the record as it stands. But it may be noticed that the substantial and weighty evidence for its reality is often overlooked by those who ought to know better. Deluges, tidal-waves (so-called), hurricanes, plagues, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, involving enormous destruction of human life, are by no means unfamiliar events. Every well-informed reader will recall instances of whole cities buried under lava or ashes, or swallowed up or overthrown by earthquakes, or desolated by pestilence ; whole armies overwhelmed with sand ; whole navies engulfed by the waves. Tens of

¹ The evidence of widespread tradition is powerfully stated by Prof. le Norman in *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, vol. I. For the bearing of geological science on the question, see *Present Day Tract*, No. 42, Vol. VII., by Sir J. W. Dawson.

thousands of human beings, old and young, virtuous or vicious, devout or godless, have perished at once. Calamities such as these present to thoughtful minds not less, but even greater, perplexities (though on a smaller scale) than the destruction, after a hundred and twenty years' warning, of a whole generation of incurably lawless and impenitent sinners.

Calamities such as occur now not less perplexing than the Deluge.

Pestilence, it may be said, cannot fairly be included in this fearful list of physical calamities. With adequate knowledge, prudence, and skill, it is largely, if not wholly, preventible. That is so. But in this case, as in others, the innocent perish with the guilty, the child with the parent; and by a death incomparably more terrible than drowning, which is one of the easiest of deaths.

The destruction of the innocent with the guilty in pestilence and other cases.

One difficulty is not solved, it may be said, by raising another, or a host of others. True. But the *venue* is changed. If it appear that the moral difficulties we find in Scripture are not greater or other than those which meet us in the constitution of nature and daily experience of human life, their weight is taken off from the Bible. The discussion of them is removed to a wider field, and their solution is to be sought not in the special circumstances of each case, but in the general character of God and His government of affairs. The grand undeniable fact that the universal tendency of all the laws both of nature and of

The same difficulties being found in nature and life as in Scripture, their weight is lifted off from the Bible.

The tendency of the laws of nature and morality shows that apparent exceptions are apparent only.

morality is wise, just, and merciful, designed to produce and to preserve happiness and holiness, warrants our assured conviction that apparent exceptions are apparent only. Wider knowledge, we may be sure, will convert these seeming exceptions into examples of wisdom, justice, and goodness.¹

It makes no difference whether we suppose the immediate cause of the deluge in Noah's time to have been strictly miraculous, or that the Creator employed the same physical causes by which, as scientific observation teaches, whole continents had been submerged in more ancient times. The Bible draws no sharp line between the miraculous and the natural. Where we fix our thoughts on nature and natural causes it shows us the hand of God.

No sharp line between the miraculous and the natural drawn in the Bible.

The Deluge unique in the history of human calamities.

The Deluge, as recorded in Genesis, stands alone in the history of human calamities by reason, first, of its stupendous scale, both of agency and of destruction; secondly, of the long warning given, with offer of escape; thirdly, of its being expressly inflicted as a Divine judgment on sin. The picture drawn in a few broad black strokes of the moral condition of mankind at that time is terrible. "There were giants in the earth in those days." The stream of life, not yet far

¹ This is the argument of Bishop Butler's great work. See *Analogy of Religion, etc.*, Pt. II., ch. viii.

from its fountain, flowed with prodigious energy. Crime grew to colossal stature. Imagine what Nero or Borgia would have become, had he combined Samson's herculean strength with Cæsar's intellectual power, and after three or four centuries of life, could have reckoned on another five or six hundred years ! The vastness of the catastrophe appals our imagination. But if we fully grasped the real facts, we should perhaps wonder not that such a generation was sentenced to extermination, but that execution of the sentence was so long delayed.

Still, were all equally guilty ? Were there none who sinned more through the terrible force of example than innate baseness ? At all events there were myriads of innocent children involved in the common doom. True. But do we need to be reminded that the suffering of the innocent with the guilty, and on account of the guilty, is part of the mysterious economy of human life ? No man lives to himself or dies to himself. Human life is a web in which all the threads hang together. This is the most tremendous aggravation of the evil of sin. But were it otherwise, what would become of affection, sympathy, benevolence, education, force of example and of moral character—in a word, all that builds up a common life in families, in nations, in the human race ?

We have accomplished all that can be reason-

The delay in executing the sentence on such a wicked generation is the wonder.

The suffering of the innocent with the guilty, part of the mysterious economy of human life.

The evil of sin aggravated by the fact that no one lives to himself.

More cannot be asked than to show that the moral difficulties of Scripture are the same as those of nature and Providence.

ably asked regarding moral difficulties in Scripture when we have shown them to be none other than confront us in nature and Providence. Any one who should deny the existence of these latter, or profess entirely to solve their mystery, would merely convict himself of ignorance, folly, and presumption. But in presence of the overwhelming evidence of Divine goodness and righteousness, our wisdom no less than our happiness is reverently to bow before the veil, and patiently wait till God's own hand withdraws it.

The Cities of the Plain.

(2) THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN. The second great example of Divine judgment on sin recorded in Genesis is the destruction of the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim (Gen. xiv. 2; cf. Deut. xxix. 23). The region in which these cities stood is described as a paradise of beauty and fertility, "like the garden of the Lord." They were so completely exterminated that the most diligent exploration has failed to find any trace—"their memorial has perished with them." The reason expressly assigned for this awful calamity is the outrageous wickedness of the inhabitants. "The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against the LORD exceedingly."

The wickedness of the people.

The considerations advanced with regard to the Deluge equally apply here. The destruction of the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii was as sudden

and terrible as of Sodom and Gomorrah. Perhaps their inhabitants were equally wicked. But to them no message of warning was sent, no opportunity held out for repentance and escape. Their doom, awful and complete as it was, ranks in history simply as one in the long series of calamities from natural causes. But, as in the case of the pestilence which slew the firstborn of Egypt and that which afflicted Israel in David's time, so in the case of the Cities of the Plain, the Scripture withdraws the veil, and shows behind the working of natural causes angelic agency executing the righteous judgment of God. The difficulty is thus not increased, but greatly lightened. If there be (as every thoughtful and candid mind feels) an insoluble residuum of moral difficulty in every such case, it is only that paramount mystery which belongs, with our present limited knowledge, to the whole scheme of human life: viz., the power of men, as free agents, *to do wrong*, with unlimited evil results, and the *solidarity* (to borrow an expressive foreign word) of mankind, implicating in these results the innocent with the guilty.

To all these and kindred difficulties there is but one reply, and it is adequate—the simple but noble and courageous faith expressed in Abraham's question, "SHALL NOT THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH DO RIGHT?"

Our Saviour expressly warns us that victims of

No warning sent to Herculaneum and Pompeii.

Their destruction due to natural causes.

Angelic agency employed in the case of the Cities of the Plain.

The one adequate reply to insoluble difficulties.

The doom
of those
who reject
the Gospel.

great physical calamities are not to be regarded as necessarily “sinners above all men,” and that wilful rejection of the message of Divine love through Him, of His atoning death, and of the witness of the Holy Spirit, will incur a doom more fearful than even that of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Luke xiii. 1-5 ; Matt. x. 15 ; xi. 24.)

The
slaughter
of the
Canaanites.

(3) THE SLAUGHTER OF HEATHEN NATIONS. Perhaps the most formidable difficulty to a large proportion of readers of the Old Testament Scriptures is that presented in the invasion of Canaan and accompanying slaughter of its inhabitants. The sting of the difficulty lies, not in the fact that in an age in which the habitual relation of nations was that of mutual hostility, and battle and massacre were everyday matters, such events actually took place, but in the fact that both the invasion and the slaughter were authorized by God’s express command.

The
difficulty
of the
Divine
authorisa-
tion.

Revolting
transactions
recorded in
ancient and
modern
history.

The remarkable *softening* process which has affected modern society is seen in nothing more strongly than in the horror with which we regard bloodshed and cruelty. History, alike of all the great nations of antiquity and of our own and other modern nations down to recent times, is crowded with transactions which strike us as not merely revolting, but almost incredible. War can never be stripped of its horrors ; but mitigations

have been introduced undreamed of in former times. Slaughter ceases when the battle is decided. Ministers of mercy attend the wounded. Non-combatants are protected by mutual agreement, and the desolating ravages which were wont to mark the track of an army are forbidden by the international consent. In military and naval discipline the lash has been prohibited. Corresponding alleviations mark the exercise of penal justice. Prisons are homes of comfort in comparison with the dungeons of former days. Capital punishment grows unpopular. Modern feeling tends to regard the criminal as an unfortunate sinned against by society, rather than a transgressor of law.

Modern sentiments are no fair test of the conduct of ancient Israel, of the Greeks, of the Romans, or even our own English forefathers. Judgment guided by this test must be ignorant and unjust. Wild and unjustifiable statements naturally result. Any one who takes the pains to acquaint himself with the ghastly punishments practised among the great nations of antiquity—as flaying alive, mutilation, crucifixion—will find reason to conclude that the ancient Hebrews, far from being a ferocious and bloodthirsty people, were marked by superior self-restraint and humanity. Judicial torture, practised even in England less than three centuries ago, had no place in

Mitigations
of modern
warfare.

Modern
feeling with
respect to
the
criminal.

Modern
sentiments
no test of
ancient
practices.

their law-courts. Even scourging was limited by law to forty stripes.

Nevertheless, when we have thus guarded against prejudice and misapprehension, we have still to face the question, *Were the children of Israel justified in invading Canaan and putting to death the inhabitants?* Right and wrong do not vary with the changing views and customs of men. God could no more enjoin anything really contrary to His justice and mercy in early ages than to-day. Abraham's question carries its answer with it for all ages—“*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*”

Nothing is more easy than, in a few pointed, scathing phrases, to represent the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, as well as the slaughter of the Midianites by command of Moses, and of the Amalekites (500 years afterwards) by command of Samuel, in so odious a light as to make it incredible that God could have sanctioned them. You need only (for this purpose) disregard the Scripture explanation of these transactions, ignore the deep underlying reasons and causes, and, in a word, assume the point to be proved. If we would avoid such shallow and rash judgment, the following considerations should be thoughtfully weighed.

Scripture explanations must not be disregarded.

Men are appointed to death.

(1) Every human life is forfeit. “It is appointed to all men once to die.” The decision of the time

and manner of death in each case rests with God, and what we call “natural death” is, in an immense proportion of cases, very much more painful than death by the sword.

The time
and manner
of death
determined
by God.

(2) The sentence which doomed these nations to extermination is everywhere expressly declared to have been *the just punishment of their outrageous wickedness*. Abraham was told, when the land was promised to his descendants, that centuries must intervene before they could possess it, because “*the iniquity of the Amorites*” was “*not yet full*.” (Gen. xv. 16.) In his day idolatry had not yet ousted the worship of the one living and true God, and therefore the foul impurity and ferocious cruelty which it brought in its train had not yet “defiled the land.” Melchisedek, it is likely, was not the only “priest of God Most High,” nor Abimelech the only king who could appeal to God to spare “a righteous nation.” (Gen. xiv. 18; xx.

The nations
of Canaan
doomed for
their
wickedness.

4.) Contrast with this the moral condition of the nations of Palestine as described by Moses. Shameless and abominable vice and revolting cruelty were an essential part of their religion. The sacrifice by fire of children by their parents is constantly referred to in the Old Testament Scriptures with especial horror. The Israelites were warned in the strongest language of terror, pathos, promise, and entreaty, that if they followed the example of the heathen, the like doom awaited them.

The nations
of Palestine
as described
by Moses.

Warnings
to Israel

"Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things : for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you : and the land is defiled : therefore do I visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not do any of these abominations that the land vomit not you out also, when ye defile it, as it vomiteth out the nation that was before you. For whosoever shall do any of these abominations, even the souls that do them shall be cut off from among their people. . . . I am JEHOVAH your God" (Lev. xviii. 24-30).

"And it shall be, if thou forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD maketh to perish before you, so shall ye perish" (Deut. viii. 19, 20).

"Speak not thou in thine heart after that the LORD thy God hath thrust them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land : whereas for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee" (Deut. ix. 4-6).

Nations
responsible
to God.

(3) Nations have their moral character and responsibility as truly as individuals, and God, in His all-ruling providence, deals with them accordingly. This principle is abundantly laid down in Scripture. (See Jer. xviii. 7-10.) What we strangely call 'profane history' abounds as much as 'sacred history' with illustrations of its truth.

The
Hebrews
the
ministers of
Divine
justice.

(4) The Hebrews, therefore, were to regard themselves as ministers of Divine justice, as literally as a public executioner is the minister of human justice. Joshua had no more authority to spare the Midianites or Canaanites than the execu-

titioner has authority to pardon the criminal on the scaffold. The terrific scale on which these judgments were carried out oppresses and afflicts our imagination. Thought recoils. We are tempted to forget the guilt of the criminals in their numbers and in their misery. But no *principle* is involved different from what is involved in the execution of a single murderer for a single crime. It might have pleased the Lord of all to employ (as in the case of the Deluge and of the Cities of the Plain) natural agents—earthquakes, pestilence, volcanic eruptions, tempest, or famine—to destroy the guilty nations. Two reasons may be pointed out (though probably by no means the only reasons) why the host of Israel was made the commissioned minister of Divine judgment. First, nothing would so tend to impress on them the guilt and fatal danger of that idolatry which, spite of these terrible memories (as their history for near a thousand years shows), had an irresistible attraction for them. Secondly, nothing could so teach the lesson of indomitable faith in Jehovah, who was able to make one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.

The scale of the judgments does not affect the principle of them.

Reasons why Israel was employed to inflict judgment.

(5) The Gospel has rendered possible what was before not even conceivable—the regeneration of a whole nation by the individuals composing it (or a considerable proportion of them) exercising personal

The Gospel renders the regeneration of a nation possible.

Instances of
national
regeneration
from the
history of
modern
missions.

repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The history of modern missions shows us tribes as ferocious and licentious as any of the inhabitants of Canaan, and far more debased—on the verge of “perishing in their own corruption”—thus regenerated. The Gospel has lifted them out of that abyss of death, given them a place in the great family of nations, and made them fountains of blessing to lands yet barbarous. But no such power, no such possibility, existed until the incarnation of the Son of God had given new value and meaning to human life, and a new starting-point to human history, and His atoning death and the mission of the Comforter had intrusted His Church with a power for converting and saving mankind, till then unknown.

The right
of the
Creator.

Mild means
could not
convert the
Canaanites.

To sum up. With reference to the first and the last of these considerations, no one, it may be presumed, will question the right of the Creator to inflict suffering and death on every human being; at least, if any one does, his quarrel is not with the Bible, but with nature. And no one will affirm that the heathen nations of Canaan could by mild means have been converted to righteousness, and so saved. The difficulty, therefore, honestly faced, comes to this: that if we account the invasion of Canaan and destruction of the inhabitants *under the actual circumstances* unjustifiable, we must deny either God's right to destroy nations as well as

individuals for even the most desperate iniquity, or else His right to employ one nation as the executioner of His judgment on another. For if God laid this burden on Israel, Israel had no choice but to obey.

Even after this tremendous experience the subsequent history of Israel shows how enormous was the difficulty of keeping the Chosen Nation from sinking to the level of surrounding nations. Law and prophecy, backed when necessary with miracle, contended in vain against the deadly contagion of idolatry, impurity, moral degradation. A terrible series of judgments was found necessary, culminating in the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. To have spared the idolatrous nations of Canaan, permitting them to dwell and intermarry among the Hebrews, would have meant the moral ruin of Israel. And the moral ruin of Israel would have meant, for the human race, the loss of the Bible, the cutting off of the life-line, the quenching of the light of the world.

“It is better,” says Dr. Thomas Arnold—a man whom no one will accuse of narrow views of Scripture, or of any tendency to sacrifice humanity to orthodoxy—

“It is better that the wicked should be destroyed a hundred times over than that they should tempt those who are as yet innocent to join their company. Let us but think what might have been our fate, and the fate of every other nation under heaven, had the sword of the Israelites done its work more

The difficulty of preserving Israel from surrounding impurity.

What the moral ruin of Israel would have meant for the human race.

Dr. Thomas Arnold's view.

Testimony
of Dr.
Thomas
Arnold.

sparingly. Even as it was, the small portions of the Canaanites who were left, and the nations around them, so tempted the Israelites by their idolatrous practices that we read of the whole people of God turning away from His service. But, had the heathen lived in the land in equal numbers, and still more, had they intermarried largely with the Israelites, how was it possible, humanly speaking, that any sparks of the light of God's truth should have survived to the coming of Christ? Would not the Israelites have lost all their peculiar character; and if they had retained the name of Jehovah as of their God, would they not have formed as unworthy notions of His attributes, and worshipped Him with a worship as abominable as that which the Moabites paid to Chemosh or the Philistines to Dagon?

"But this was not to be, and therefore the nations of Canaan were to be cut off utterly. The Israelites' sword, in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth to the very end of the world. They seem of very small importance to us now, those perpetual contests with the Canaanites and the Midianites, and the Ammonites, with which the Books of Joshua and Judges and Samuel are almost filled. We may half wonder that God should have interfered in such quarrels, or have changed the course of nature, in order to give one of the nations of Palestine the victory over another. But in these contests, on the fate of one of these nations the happiness of the human race depended. The Israelites fought not for themselves only, but for us. It might follow that they should thus be accounted the enemies of all mankind,—it might be that they were tempted by their very distinctness to despise other nations; still they did God's work,—still they preserved unhurt the seed of eternal life, and were the ministers of blessing to all other nations, even though they themselves failed to enjoy it."¹

¹ Arnold's *Sermons*, vi. 35–37; quoted in Stanley's *Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church*, i. 227–8. (Ed. 1885.)

V.

THIRD EXAMPLE: THE TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH IN THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

THE name of Abraham is among the greatest in history. His spiritual stature is colossal among those who "obtained a good report through faith." The very few whom we could think of placing in the same rank with him counted it their glory to be descended from him and to be "heirs with him of the same promise." It is by no mere figure of rhetoric that he is styled "the father of the faithful." An unbroken line of spiritual influence—exerted through education, example, fellowship, and prayer—not less real than the line of physical descent, connects the tent and altar of Abraham with every Christian church and home. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed" (Gal. iii. 29). Abraham's example has, therefore, for Christians a practical interest surpassing that of any other of the Hebrew saints and heroes.

Abraham
among the
greatest
names in
history

The
connection
of every
Christian
church and
home with
Israel.

History depicts no scene more grandly pathetic—leaving out of comparison the Supreme Sacrifice so mysteriously foreshadowed—than that of the aged chief, with slow but firm step, climbing the steep side of Mount Moriah, carrying the vessel of glowing charcoal for the altar and the sacrificial knife, while at his side the active youth, uncon-

The
sacrifice of
Isaac.

Isaac's question.

Abraham's answer.

God's approval.

The culminating triumph of Abraham's faith.

The moral difficulty of the narrative.

scious how every footfall of his elastic tread smites on his father's heart, bears the bundle of cleft wood, and with a sudden perplexity asks—"My father. . . . Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?"

The patriarch's answer is unsurpassed for sublimity—"My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." Nowhere is Divine approval more strongly expressed than in the sequel to this scene—

"Now I know that thou fearest God. . . . By Myself have I sworn, saith the LORD; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, . . . BECAUSE THOU HAST OBeyed MY VOICE." (Gen. xxii. 12-18.)

Accordingly, in the New Testament Scriptures, this act of Abraham is held up as the culminating triumph of Abraham's faith and crown of his righteousness. (James ii. 21-23; Heb. xi. 17-19.)

Modern criticism is more keen-witted than ancient inspiration. Instead of emulating Abraham's faith, we are invited to compassionate his delusion. Preachers are not afraid to speak of "*Abraham's mistake.*"

The difficulty, such as it is, lies on the surface. It would be a crime, it is urged—a hideous, unnatural crime—for a father to slay his innocent son. It is incredible that God should tempt any one to commit a crime. Therefore Abraham must have been deluded in supposing that God commanded

him to sacrifice Isaac.¹ Abraham, it is imagined, was accustomed to see human sacrifices offered by the heathen amongst whom he sojourned. The thought presented itself, or was suggested to his mind, that to sacrifice his beloved Isaac would be the consummate proof of his devotion to God. This fearful idea haunted him until he determined to carry it out, mistaking the working of his own imagination for a Divine command.

Obviously this explanation lands us in a difficulty at least as serious as that which it professes to solve. For on this supposition our Heavenly Father not only permitted His servant, whose guiding principle for half a century had been the obedience of faith, to continue under this horrible hallucination till the very moment when his hand was lifted for the fatal stroke, but stamped his conduct with the highest approval, and left it to stand for near four thousand years as a splendid example of faith and obedience, until the critics of the nineteenth century should discover that it was not faith, but fancy; not piety, but insanity!

The explanation offered.

The difficulty of the explanation.

¹ To not a few readers the difficulty is complicated by the use of the word "tempt" in Gen. xxii. 1 (A.V.). The sense, "to solicit to evil" (which Johnson gives as the proper sense), is not the original meaning even of the English word "tempt," still less of the Hebrew word so translated, which signifies to "try, prove, test." The Revisers have, therefore, rightly substituted, "God did prove Abraham."

The use of the word "tempt."

The following considerations deserve to be thoughtfully weighed.¹

No evidence of human sacrifices in Abraham's time.

Abraham's sacrifice not propitiatory.

Human sacrifices from Moses time condemned.

Improbable that the thought of sacrificing Isaac originated with Abraham.

(1) There is no evidence that human sacrifices were in use among the nations of Palestine as early as Abraham's time.

(2) There is no resemblance between Abraham's sacrifice and sacrifices offered under the pressure of dire calamity to avert Divine wrath, like that of the king of Moab's son (2 Kings iii. 27), or that of Agamemnon's daughter in the Greek legend. It was not meant to be a propitiatory sacrifice.

(3) References to human sacrifices in later ages are abundant from the time of Moses onward, but they are branded with the strongest expressions of Divine displeasure and detestation.²

(4) Isaac was the child of promise, and the heir of those far-reaching promises whose accomplishment hung on his being the ancestor of an innumerable posterity. It is, therefore, wildly improbable that the thought of slaying him could originate with Abraham. How he reconciled this command with the promises is explained

¹ See the masterly and careful treatment of this subject by Dr. Mozley in his *Ruling Ideas in Early Ages* (Oxford, 1877).

² Comp. Psa. cvi. 37-39; Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2-5; Deut. xii. 31; Isa. lvii. 5; Jer. xix. 4, 5.

in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead." (Heb. xi. 19.)

How Abraham reconciled command and promise.

(5) The command, agonizing as it was to the father's heart, would present no stumbling-block to his conscience. Modern views of the sacredness of individual life and personal liberty have slowly grown out of that new dignity with which the Gospel invests every human being. The facts of the Incarnation and Atonement of the Son of God, and the doctrines of the personal responsibility of each conscience to God, and of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in every believing heart, have placed human life on a new basis. According to the ethics of the ancient world, a man's wife and children were considered part of himself, absolutely subject to his will, and even liable to punishment for his crime. To have questioned this would have been thought to shake the foundations of morality. Two thousand years after Abraham, Roman fathers had absolute power of life and death over their children, as is the case in China to-day.¹

The command no difficulty to Abraham's conscience.

Human life placed on a new basis by the facts of Incarnation and Atonement.

The power of life and death over their children of Roman fathers.

¹ Even according to English law the children of a noble attainted of treason lose their rank, honour, and property. The above considerations apply to other passages of Old Testament history—*e.g.*, the punishment of Achan (Josh. vii.). Achan's guilt implicated the whole nation, until purged by discovery and punishment. This may not accord with our ideas of justice, but it was demanded by that sentiment of *national*

A case supposed.

No analogy between this and the case of Abraham.

Abraham had no Bible, and THE voice that commanded him was unmistakeable.

An apparently formidable difficulty is sometimes presented in the form of a question :—Suppose any one at the present day were to hear a voice from heaven commanding him to kill some one, ought he to obey it? The reply is that there is no analogy between this imaginary case and the case of Abraham. With the full revelation of truth and duty which we possess, and with the promised teaching of the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer, we stand in no need of voices from heaven, and have no right to expect them. We should reasonably conclude such a voice to be a delusion. But Abraham had no Bible, no external criterion of duty. It was not *a voice* which he obeyed but THE Voice which had been the Guide of his life, and which had never misled him. To have doubted or disobeyed would have been to go against all his experience; to falsify his whole life as a believer.

To sum up: this Divine command, which it was impossible for Abraham to doubt or disregard, which required nothing that the Creator has not a supreme right to require, and nothing at variance

unity which sprang from common descent, which was confirmed by God's covenant made with the whole nation, and which it was one great purpose of God's dealings to strengthen. For Achan's sons and daughters, who were probably accomplices in his crime, death was preferable to the misery which would have come upon them had they survived him.

either with Abraham's own conscience or with the ideas of morality, then universally prevailing, applied the severest conceivable test to his faith and obedience. He stood the test, and took his place among the heroes of faith. Nearly 2,000 years afterwards, one who (inspiration apart) was surely as competent a judge as any of us of right and wrong, asked—not deeming more than one answer possible—"Was not Abraham our father proved righteous by deeds, when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" (James ii. 21.) ¹

The command applied a test to his faith and obedience.

VI.

IMPRECATIONS IN CERTAIN PSALMS.

WE must never fail to bear in mind that, in treating of the "moral difficulties of the Bible," we are concerned not so much with the attacks of partisan opponents, eager to score a point, as with the perplexity of candid and devout minds eager for truth. To many such readers, one of the most serious stumbling-blocks is the occurrence in certain Psalms (more especially the 7th, 35th, 69th, 109th) of passages invoking, or at least denouncing, Divine

The perplexities of candid, devout and truth-seeking minds sought to be met.

¹ The typical significance of the narration is beyond the scope of our present discussion; yet it is of profound interest. Who can read Gen. xxii. 6, 16, and not be reminded of John xix. 17 and Rom. viii. 32?

wrath upon the wicked, which seem to them discordant with the precepts and spirit of the Gospel.

This difficulty occupies much narrower ground than those already considered. It has no bearing on the Divine dealings, either with Israel or with the rest of mankind. It affects no doctrine of revealed truth. It concerns simply the spirit and temper of the writers of those Psalms, and the inferences to be drawn regarding their inspiration, and by analogy, that of the other Old Testament writers. It calls, therefore, for serious and candid consideration.

There would be no difficulty if these imprecations occurred in one of the historical books of Scripture. The inspired scribes record the mistakes and sins of good men as impartially as the sayings and doings of bad men. The value of the Book of Psalms would still be immense if regarded as simply a record of spiritual experience. But we do not regard it simply in that light. We accept it as an inspired manual of devotion for the use of the Church and of every believer for all time. The psalmists were not poets merely, but prophets. "Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." If so, these inspired utterances, widely though times and circumstances differ, cannot morally contradict the inspired utterances of apostles or the teaching of our Lord. How, then, can we reconcile such sentiments as—

The spirit
and temper
of the
writers of
the
imprecatory
Psalms.

The
psalmists
were
prophets.
Their
utterances
cannot
morally
contradict
the teaching
of the
Apostles
and the
Lord.

“Raise me up, that I may requite them” (Psa. xli. 10),

The
psalmists'
impreca-
tions.

“Let their way be dark and slippery, and let the angel of the LORD persecute them” (Psa. xxxv. 6),

or the tremendous anathemas of Psa. cix., with our Saviour's words?—

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you.”

The
Saviour's
precepts.

“If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

If we say,¹ “Such a wish cannot be reconciled with our better Christian conscience,” we seem to be calling the Scriptures to our bar instead of taking them as “the lamp of our feet.” Suppose we say, “The real source of the difficulty lies in our not observing and bearing in mind the essential difference between the Old Testament and the New. The older dispensation was in every sense a sterner one than the New.”² This is true so far, but it does not reach the heart of the difficulty. For if both dispensations, with their accompanying Scriptures, were from God, whatever superiority the New may have over the Old, there can be no real moral opposition. There must be spiritual unity. Change of method, progress of Divine revelation of truths, does not mean change in the principles

The Old
and the New
dispensa-
tions alike
from God.

The
principles of
morality the
same in
both.

¹ With Canon Perowne, in his valuable and devout *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. i., p. 331.

² Perowne, p. 294.

The
Saviour
quotes from
the law of
Moses.

of morality. It is from the law of Moses that our Saviour quotes the two great Commandments. Elijah was as much bound to "love his neighbour as himself" as James and John. If he was justified in calling down fire from heaven, why were they rebuked for asking permission to do the same? (Luke ix. 54.)

The
difference
between a
private
person and
a Divinely
com-
missioned
messenger.

This particular instance, perhaps, may help us to see our way as to the whole question. Had Elijah been a private person, or had his prophetic office been *simply a religious mission*, it would doubtless have been as much his duty, as it was the duty of the apostles, to submit unresistingly to the civil power. But Elijah was not a private person. He was the duly attested, specially commissioned messenger, both to the king and to the nation, of the Supreme Ruler. The basis of public life and law in Israel was the Covenant made at Mount Sinai. (Exod. xx. 3-8.) No king of Israel, whether of Judah or of the Ten Tribes, had any lawful authority but as "the Lord's anointed," the vicegerent of the Divine King. The commission of a prophet like Samuel, Nathan, or Elijah was therefore, in reality as much political as religious. Ahaziah's attempt to arrest Elijah was a daring act of rebellion, against which Elijah was bound to protest. His sole resource lay in an immediate appeal to heaven, and the instant and terrible response was a vindication before the eyes of all

The
commission
of a
prophet
political
as well as
religious.

men, not merely of Elijah's mission, but of that Divine authority against which the king and his people were rebels. "The captains of fifties with their fifties" perished as soldiers fall on the field of battle, in obedience to orders, the blame of which was not theirs, but his who gave them.

The same fundamental principles ought to guide our judgment regarding the memorable conflict between Elijah and the priests of Baal, and the tremendous execution which followed. Elijah appealed to God in presence of a representative assembly of Israel. The people acknowledged the result to be decisive. The consequent slaughter of the idolatrous priests and prophets was an act of strict obedience to the law of Moses (Deut. xiii.) —one of those laws by which every State protects its own existence against treason and rebellion.

Now let us apply these principles of judgment to the so-called "imprecatory Psalms." Inspiration, which seems to create the difficulty, also supplies the key. Prophetic inspiration implied prophetic authority. In David's case, regal authority was combined with prophetic. The persons denounced in these Psalms are enemies of God, of religion, of the commonwealth. It is true that they are also (at least in some cases) personal enemies of the Psalmist; but they are denounced as sinners against God—impious, faithless, cruel, impenitent transgressors of God's law, which was

The contest
between
Elijah and
the priests of
Baal.

The result
regarded as
decisive.

Prophetic
inspiration
implied
prophetic
authority.

The King in Israel bound to execute judgment on transgressors of God's law.

Private malignity not to be imputed to the inspired mouthpiece of Divine and public justice.

The Seventh Psalm.
The time of its composition.

Its restrained expressions.

also the fundamental law of the State. It was the king's duty, if he had power, to execute justice upon them. Finding himself powerless, he appeals to the Superior Tribunal.

We have no right, I conceive, to assume that a man who is the inspired mouthpiece of Divine and public justice is at the same time actuated by private malignity. Grant that it may have been difficult for him to suppress personal revengeful feelings, just as it might be difficult for the most upright judge, were he sentencing to death the murderer of his child. If his sentence were dictated, or in any degree swayed by such feelings, he would be pronouncing his own condemnation. But the temptation to indulge them, and the struggle against that temptation, would not affect the justice of the sentence or his duty to pronounce it.

Psalm vii. presents an example to which the foregoing remarks are not wholly applicable. Internal evidence indicates it to have been composed when David was suffering persecution from Saul. Although inspired (or there would be no difficulty to solve), and in that sense a prophet, he had no public prophetic mission, like Elijah's or Isaiah's. And though high in rank and public service, he was not yet king. Accordingly, the expressions are much more restrained than when the prophet speaks as the Lord's anointed. The Psalm is an impassioned cry to Jehovah (as "*my God*") for

justice, against man's injustice. David declares himself ready to suffer any punishment or indignity which his conduct has really deserved (vers. 3-5). Those against whom he appeals are not simply his enemies, but God's—wicked men, faithless, pitiless (vers. 9, 11, 14-16). And he asks for judgment to be pronounced and executed, not for his own sake simply, but on public grounds, because God is the Judge of nations as well as individuals, and justice between man and man is one main pillar of the State (vers. 6-8).

David's declaration and appeal.

The grounds of this prayer for judgment.

Before we pronounce this inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity, we ought to see to it that we have sufficiently studied the type and touchstone of practical Christianity—the example of our Saviour. Denunciations of sin and sinners, and warnings of vengeance quite as severe as any in the Psalms, came from the same lips which said, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." For example :—

"I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city. . . . And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell [Hades]." (Luke x. 12-15.)

Warnings of vengeance.

"Those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." (Luke xix. 27.)

"Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the judgment of hell [Gehenna]?" (Matt. xxiii. 33.)

Our Saviour's denunciation of sin and sinners.

"Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken ; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." (Matt. xxi. 44.)

Christ's
invitations
and declara-
tion con-
cerning
those who
would not
come to
Him.

Jesus invited all to come to Him for free and instant salvation ; but this did not prevent His saying to those who "would not come to Him that they might have life,"—

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." (John viii. 42-44.)

His tears
over Jerusa-
lem and
prediction of
its doom.

He wept over the guilty city, but He foretold her doom in all its unrivalled horror. He prayed for His murderers ; but the plea "*for they know not what they do*" implies a limit to the possibility of pardon. He has told us that there are sins which are never forgiven. The most tremendous warnings of future punishment are from His lips.

The contrast
between the
Old Testa-
ment and the
New one
between law
and love,
righteous-
ness and
mercy.

"The spirit of Christianity" is the spirit of Christ. It is unjust, shallow, altogether misleading, to contrast the spirit of the Old Testament with that of the New, if we fail to keep in mind that the contrast is not like that between the human and the Divine, or that which St. Paul draws between "the spirit of the world" and "the spirit which is of God" (1 Cor. ii. 12) ; but like that between law and love, between righteousness and mercy. These are centrally and fundamentally one ; but yet in their exercise may seem at variance. The great lesson of the Old Testament was LAW. Divine mercy was there, draped in a

veil of types, yet proclaimed by prophet after prophet with evangelic clearness. But the worshippers' eyes were not yet purged to see her unveiled face. Until the great truth had been emphatically taught that "the wages of sin is death"—alike to the individual and to the nation—mankind were not prepared for the lesson of the New Testament: that Law is Love, because God is Love, and Love, therefore, the supreme Law.

Mercy revealed in the Old Testament.

Men not ready for the lesson of the New Testament until they were taught that "the wages of sin is death."

VII.

CONCLUSION.

AN exhaustive treatment of *The Moral Difficulties of the Old Testament* is not the aim of these pages. Perhaps no such treatment is possible. The foregoing examples have been taken as the most prominent, and most frequently referred to, and as involving principles of wide application.

The moral difficulties of the Old Testament no new discovery.

These difficulties are no new discovery. Many a devout heart has puzzled over them and prayed over them in by-gone days. They are not the offspring of intellectual progress and learned research. They concern the heart and conscience rather than the intellect. Yet there is much in the temper and spirit of this age to aggravate them. The immense wealth of knowledge of all sorts with which the world has been almost suddenly enriched, and the higher moral level (spite of all our follies, weak-

Much to aggravate them in the temper and spirit of this age.

nesses, and sins) which we are conscious of having gained, as to public sentiment, if not as to personal practice, greatly strengthen the temptation (incident to every age) to make our own ways of thinking, feeling, acting, the standard by which to try all preceding ages. Not a few, moreover, who set up for critics, with no misgiving as to their complete equipment, are woefully lacking in one essential qualification for just criticism of the past — *imagination*. That is, the power to put ourselves in others' places,—see with their eyes; enter into their hopes, fears, joys, sorrows; judge with their consciences.

Imagination
essential to
just
criticism.

The eternal
principles of
right and
wrong do
not change
with time
and place.

The eternal principles of right and wrong, the essential obligation to do justice and to love mercy, do not change with east or west longitude or vary with the lapse of centuries. But particular duties do vary with persons, circumstances, ignorance, or enlightenment. We are bound to judge men's conduct, as we are expressly told that God judges it, by the light which they had, not by the light we have. There is no need to attempt to justify all the actions or utterances of even the greatest saints and heroes of the Church. The Scriptures impartially record their faults as well as their virtues. But we make it simply impossible to learn the lessons either of their faults or of their virtues, if we judge them by an inappropriate standard.

No need to
justify all
the actions
of the
greatest
saints and
heroes of the
Church.

An
appropriate
standard
must be
applied.

For example: Eleven hundred years before the

Christian era public sentiment was so strong as to the irrevocable obligation and awful sacredness of vows and oaths, that King Saul would have felt himself compelled to put to death his noble and victorious son, for a most innocent and trifling act, done in pure ignorance, had not a sudden outburst of popular feeling for the moment overswept those sacred barriers, and rescued Jonathan. (1 Sam. xiv. 24–30, 37–45.)

Public
sentiment as
to vows in
Saul's time.

So, again, to our modern way of thinking, there could scarcely be a more revolting tragedy than the execution of two of Saul's sons and five of his grandsons, in expiation of Saul's murderous violation of national faith towards the Gibeonites. (2 Sam. xxi. 1–14.) Yet we shall blame David quite ignorantly, if we overlook the place held among ancient nations by the principle and duty of blood-vengeance (which the law of Moses modified, but did not venture to abolish); or if we suppose the doctrine of repudiation to have been applicable to public engagements in that age. A writer whose claims on the gratitude of Bible students ought not to be allowed to pass into forgetfulness, says:—

The
principle and
duty of
blood-
vengeance
among
ancient
nations.

“ We have wasted the pains which, at different times, we have taken in expounding the doctrine of avengement for blood, if the reader has not perceived that the demand of the Gibeonites was one which the king could not refuse. They might have accepted the blood-fine; but this was optional with them, and they were perfectly entitled to refuse it, and to demand blood for blood. That the persons who were slain had themselves no hand in the crime for which they were punished, is more than

Dr. Kitto on
the doctrine
of avenge-
ment for
blood.

we know ; it is most likely that they were active parties in it. . . . But even were this not the case, it is a well-known principle of blood-avengement that the heirs and relatives of the blood-shedder are responsible for the blood in their own persons, in case the avenger is not able to reach the actual perpetrator.”¹

The history and character of David have been made the butt of a good deal of unjust and unintelligent criticism. The words of Samuel, “The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart” (1 Sam. xiii. 14), spoken of him when a youth, distinguished as yet only for valour, genius, and piety, have been laid hold of as if meant to describe his whole life, and to cover those heinous crimes which disgraced his later years, and of which he has recorded his own judgment in the most pathetic and sublime strain of penitence ever written.²

Samuel’s words are not meant to describe David as a faultless pattern of holiness, but as one admirably fitted to fill that place for which Saul, though not devoid of royal qualities, had shown himself utterly unfit, as leader, under God, of God’s people. Saul’s career ranks among the

Samuel's
testimony to
David.

David's
fitness to
be leader
of God's
people.

¹ Kitto’s *Bible History*, p. 491.

² “Thereupon the unbelievers sneer and ask, Is this your man according to God’s heart ? The sneer, I must say, seems to me but a shallow one. . . . Of all acts, is not, for a man, *repentance* the most Divine?” . . . “The greatest of faults, I should say, is to be conscious of none.” (Carlyle’s *Lectures on Heroes*, Lect. II., p. 219, ed. 1858. Quoted by Dean Stanley, *Jewish Church*, Lect. xxiv.)

most tragic failures, David's among the most splendid successes in history. He was indeed no faultless model: it would have been miraculous if he had been. Endowed with a wonderfully large, warm, sensitive, richly-gifted nature; inured from boyhood to war, and that of the worst kind, a life-and-death struggle with alien heathen dwellers in the same land; compelled for years to lead an outlaw's life through the murderous hate of the man whose kingdom he had saved, and whose daughter he had married; raised at thirty to the throne, and in less than ten years finding himself possessed of almost despotic power, the idol of his people, every wish gratified and every foe vanquished:—is it wonderful that prosperity, as so often, proved fatal to his simplicity, purity, uprightness, generosity, and even to that devoted loyalty to God's law and will which was one of his most eminent characteristics? Is it wonderful that his later years belied the splendid promise of his youth, and laid up a store of bitter suffering and shame for his old age? Contrary to the express command of Moses (Deut. xvii. 17), he “multiplied wives to himself” in emulation of the harems of heathen monarchs. Arbitrary power (as perhaps it always does) deadened and perverted conscience. Self-indulgence broke down the walls of virtue. At last he fell into those shameful crimes for which scarcely any words of condem-

David not a faultless model.

His outlaw life.

Spoiled by prosperity.

The effect of arbitrary power.

nation can be too severe, as none can be more severe than the sentence he passes on himself.

In the long roll of great warriors, great rulers, great poets, David's compeers, it would be mournfully easy to find many parallels to his sins ; but where shall we find a parallel to his repentance ?

The
repentance
of David.

In his deep sense of guilt, self-abasement before God and man, and earnest prayer not merely for pardon but for inward purity and rectitude, we need not be afraid once more to bestow the name which honoured his youth—the morning star of his life—"a man after God's own heart."

David's
dying
charge to
Solomon.

David's dying charge to his son Solomon has often been regarded as an expression of secretly cherished revenge, shocking at any time, but most wicked on a death-bed. If this were so, it would be strangely inconsistent with the character of the man who blessed God for keeping him from taking vengeance on Nabal in hot blood ; who twice spared Saul, though urged by his soldiers to destroy him ; and who forbade them even to smite Shimei when pouring out his blasphemous treason. The dying king had to advise his young and inexperienced successor how to deal with two disaffected powerful subjects, whose forfeited lives, on different grounds, he had spared. The safety of the Throne and State had to be considered. Solomon's subsequent conduct showed that he understood not that his father wished to make him an instrument

of his vengeance, but that, if these men again offended, he was not to imitate his father's clemency.

If there be readers who cannot perceive that in times like those, when Christianity was but a dim promise in the distant future, the "rod of iron" was very needful in the ruler's hand, if law, justice, liberty, and virtue were to be kept alive among men; and that alike in God's and in man's government, severity is often the most far-sighted mercy,—for such readers, history has been written in vain.

Among the terrible deeds of blood, belonging to an earlier period of Israel's history, is the murder of Eglon by Ehud. The statement of the writer of Judges that "the LORD raised them up a saviour" in the person of Ehud, no more implies God's approval of his deed than the previous statement that "the LORD strengthened Eglon king of Moab against them" sanctions Eglon's idolatry and tyranny. Yet in condemning Ehud, as judged by our modern standard of right and wrong, let us not forget that many centuries later the most cultured people of the ancient world glorified the murderers of a tyrant as heroes and martyrs, although the deed of Harmodius and Aristogeiton was prompted not by patriotism, but by private revenge. We must not forget, either, that within half-a-century of the Christian era, some of the

The "rod of iron" in
the ruler's
hand
needed in
those times.

Eglon and
Ehud.

Ehud's
deed not
approved
by God.

The
assassina-
tion of
Julius
Cæsar.

noblest Romans deemed themselves justified in assassinating Julius Cæsar, as the enemy of the Commonwealth. So different were the moral standards of ancient times from ours.

If we would form a judgment worth forming—consistent, that is, with reverence and candour as well as good sense, on the moral teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures, it is not enough that we refrain from applying to the men and the events of past ages, tests and standards which are wholly misplaced.

We must take that teaching—the teaching of the Law, the Psalms, the Prophets—as a whole.

Is it not a fact that these wonderful Hebrew writings, with all their diversity of authorship, age, and special character, do present a consistent unbroken system of moral teaching?

Throughout, they base human morality not alone on the Authority, but on the Character of God. We are to be holy, because He is holy. Throughout,

the individual man is treated as personally responsible to God. Throughout, in the face of the tremendous judgments inflicted on sin, it is maintained that goodness and mercy are as essential and leading features of the Divine character as justice. (Comp. Exodus xxxiv. 5-7;

Micah vi. 6-8.) Is not our Lord's declaration strictly true, that on the two all-comprehending laws of supreme love to God, and unselfish love to man, "*hang all the Law and the Prophets*,"—in

The teaching
of the Law
and the
Prophets as
a whole.

Human
morality
based on the
character of
God.

Goodness
and mercy
as essential
to God's
character as
justice.

other words, the whole ethics of the Old Testament? And lastly, is it not true that this system of moral teaching is as unique as it is simple and sublime,—without parallel in the codes, philosophies, and religions of the whole heathen world?

The sceptic must not imagine his case proved, till such questions as these can fairly be answered in the negative. The Christian need not tremble for his faith, as long as they can be confidently answered in the affirmative.

Watchful observers are well aware of the growing tendency, not merely among sceptics, but among religious people, to undervalue and neglect the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Let it be seriously asked, whether such neglect and depreciation can possibly be reconciled with frank, reverent, loving faith in those of the New. Our Lord's references to the Scriptures, as an authority from which there is no appeal, form one of the most marked features of His doctrine. "*The Scripture,*" He says, "*cannot be broken.*" The Apostles, in this respect, tread closely in His steps. We cannot reject the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament Scriptures without dethroning the Apostles—especially St. Paul—from their office as authorised teachers of Christ's word, and enthroning ourselves in their empty chairs.¹

The whole ethics of the Old Testament based on love.

The unique character of this teaching.

The case of the sceptic unproved.

Tendency to undervalue the Old Testament.

Our Lord's reference to the Scriptures.

The inspiration and authority of the Old Testament inseparably bound up with the New.

¹ Taking our Lord's teaching recorded in the Gospels, and that of the Apostles together, every book of the Old Testament is

The difficulties involved in rejecting Christ greater than any evoked by study or criticism.

Difficulties affecting our Christian belief must be honestly faced and patiently weighed, not ignored or slurred over. Yet when all is said it remains true, that no difficulties evoked by either devout study or hostile criticism of the Bible, are comparable in magnitude, importance, or stubborn reality, to the difficulties involved in rejecting Him who has said, of whoever receives not His teaching—"The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him."

cited in the New Testament, except Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Lamentations, and three of the lesser prophets—Obadiah, Nahum, Zephaniah.—See *The Continuity of Scripture as declared by the Testimony of our Lord and of the Evangelists and Apostles.* By William Page, Lord Hatherley. (Murray, 1869.)



UNITY OF FAITH

A Proof of the Divine Origin and Preservation
of Christianity.

BY THE

REV. JOHN STOUGHTON, D.D.,
Author of

"HISTORICAL THEOLOGY," "THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT HISTORICALLY
AND SCRIPTURALLY EXAMINED," ETC.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:

56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

THE design of this Tract is to show the large measure of unity which exists in the hearts and thoughts of Christians, notwithstanding manifold differences and controversies, and the large measure of agreement to be found in the creeds of Christendom from the earliest to the latest periods in Church History. The evidence of this agreement in relation to the Unity and Fatherhood of God, the condition of man, the doctrine of Christ, the Personality and work of the Holy Spirit, salvation by faith, the future or "the last things," also the authority of Scripture, in the formulated doctrines of the various branches of the professing Church, is examined. The records of experience in Christian Biography and the expression of deep convictions and desires amongst believers of every name in Christian Hymns are also noticed; and the conclusion is reached that having regard to the acceptance of Christianity by people of every race, the unique and peculiar character of the fundamental truths of Christianity, the unparalleled character of its literature, the diverse idiosyncrasies of race and individual character, and the natural aversion of the human heart to the truths of the Gospel, nothing but the teaching of the Holy Spirit can account for the Unity of Faith which exists, and has existed from the beginning. It is shown also how the New Testament anticipated what has actually occurred.

UNITY OF FAITH.



HE divisions of Christendom are sadly manifest. Eastern and Western, Lutheran, Calvinistic and other Churches are encompassed by dense clouds of controversy. It might have been conjectured that there would be manifest and indisputable agreement amongst Christ's followers; but actual history differs from ideal ones. Many therefore turn from Christianity with distrust, in some cases with aversion; yet, looking at human nature, differences of opinion in this department of human thought seem inevitable, since no subjects of an intellectual kind can be excluded from the domain of free discussion except mathematical axioms and demonstrations. If no varieties of conclusion existed in religious history, such a fact would be made an objection to the thing itself, as inimical to all liberty of investigation, as crushing mental activity, as mechanically stereotyping the ideas of its disciples. The very controversies charged upon it, and which

Divisions of Christendom

Actual and ideal history.

Inevitable differences of opinion.

Christianity does not stereotype the ideas of its disciples,

are, it must be confessed, too often conducted on principles and in a spirit which good men deplore, at any rate bear witness to it as a power which has stirred humanity to the utmost, and called forth the exercise of its faculties with pre-eminent vigour.

Ecclesiastical and ritual questions the most striking.

The most striking points of difference, at least those which first attract the notice of superficial observers relate to ecclesiastical questions, and forms of worship: What constitutes a Christian Church; what is the true order of the ministry; what distinctions are there in its offices; what relations ought to be maintained between its institutions and secular society; what are the sacraments which Christ ordained for the benefit of His people; what is the scriptural mode of service in the House of God, liturgical or extempore, ritualistic or simple; what is the best method of working out practically the religious and benevolent purposes of the Gospel—these are questions which have been, and are obviously in dispute, between the different sections of ancient and modern Christendom. But underneath these contentions, in a multitude of cases, may be found an agreement in fundamental beliefs of doctrine, as properly distinguishable from organization and observances. Happily, many members of all churches are essentially one in these convictions. Besides, they heartily unite to circulate those Scriptures to which they alike appeal as the

Fundamental agreement beneath these questions.

ground of their faith—conscious submission to the authority of the Bible being a vital bond of union. Further, they can heartily and zealously co-operate in the diffusion of Christian and healthy literature on a large variety of subjects.

But, after all, there remain many points of doctrinal diversity, and with these we propose to deal, showing that a large amount of united belief lies in the centre of theological divergencies.

A formal creed, some may think, was desirable at the opening of the Christian era: no such creed, however, can be found, for what is generally called “the Apostles’ Creed” is composed of elementary statements gathered from different authors, who indeed wrote under the influence of apostolic teaching, and have given us the substance of historical and doctrinal truth handed down from the earliest date; but the document now so often devoutly repeated was not composed by the inspired twelve, in the form it has come down to the present day. That creed, however, is generally acknowledged by the Christian Church, and is a basis of union inestimably precious; no one who was present at the Evangelical Conference of New York in 1873 can ever forget the effect produced by the repetition of those simple and beautiful words by representatives of Evangelical Churches of America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. A creed more elaborate, and of minuter detail, if framed at

Points of
doctrinal
diversity.

No primi-
tive creed.

The
contents of
the so-called
Apostles'
Creed.

Its value as
a basis of
union.

the beginning, would not have secured perfect unanimity of opinion in particulars of minor description, any more than the Bible itself has done. Some diversities of thought are inevitable. No formal creed, no comprehensive and professedly strict organization has ever produced mental uniformity. It never can. Truth has many sides; and before the canon of Scripture was settled, various aspects of truth came before individual minds, and partial apprehensions were natural results. They would carry a lasting influence; and this fact, in connection with differences of race, and of idiosyncracy, as well as the influence of education, and other circumstances, had a tendency to produce, to a greater or less extent, varieties of impression. In history, in science founded on observation, and in all departments of metaphysical philosophy, antagonisms arise; and though the Holy Spirit is promised to lead the Church into all truth, for purposes of holiness, for growth in grace, for the quickening of divine life, there is nothing in that promise to warrant the expectation that communities and individuals will all agree in the mental perception of every subject included within the range of divine teaching.

What the
promise of
the Holy
Spirit leads
us to expect.

Theological
differences
and religious
unity.

Theological differences on some points, and *religious* unity as to main principles, are quite compatible. Theological differences are chiefly intellectual; but religious unity is spiritual and

A formal
creed
cannot
produce
mental
uniformity.

The many-
sidedness
and partial
apprehen-
sions
of truth.

moral, having more to do with the heart and will, than with the understanding and reason. There is, after all, far more unity amidst diversities of theological opinion, than is apparent to those who are not largely acquainted with the history and inner life of Christendom. A vast unity, lying in the depths of sanctified souls, is beautifully revealed as we read memoirs of men belonging to different denominations. Some grand truths, which they have laid hold of with a firm grip, were perhaps little expected to be seen in these letters and diaries; hence they have awakened surprise in readers who had only heard of them as identified with communities separate from their own. The old saying that "blood is thicker than water" has been verified, as Christians have recognized a kinship of spiritual life in those whom they had ignorantly imagined as being "strangers and foreigners." Further than that, there is in intellectual apprehensions of doctrine, more of approximation, more of real resemblance than at first is visible. Divisions are apparent at a glance; but deeper inquiry, more patient study, brings to light fundamental agreements, at the sight of which much that before stood out forbiddingly within the sphere of critical vision, melts away, if not into invisibility, yet into comparative insignificance. Many a dispute which has agitated what is called the religious world, when calmly

The real
unity
brought to
light in
Christian
biography.

Approxima-
tion in
intellectual
apprehen-
sions of
truth

The origin
of many
disputes.

looked at, is found to have originated in ambiguity of language, it may be in the different meanings of the same word.

Value of
unity of
faith
between
different
religious
fellowships.

A special value should be attached to unity of faith between different religious fellowships. It is of much more worth, it tells much more powerfully in argument, than myriads of subscriptions to the same articles, and untold repetitions of the same creed.

A free acceptance of certain views founded on personal conviction is utterly different from a formal consent arising merely from the imposition of ecclesiastical authorities. The former is precious, and is a witness for the truth professed; the latter is utterly worthless, and proves nothing.

The
purpose of
the Tract.

It is our purpose to point out in this Tract an existent unity of faith, and to place it side by side with differences—the very darkness which it serves to bring out, by force of contrast, increases the radiance of the light—and at the end to show how this unity bears upon the evidence of the Gospel being of Divine origin. As we proceed, let it be remembered that *contrasts* are not always *contradictions*; and that what seems at first like opposition, may be found to be simply the effect of looking at the same thing on *opposite* sides. Moreover, in comparing past and present opinions, account must be taken of the progress of Christian thought. The Word of God liveth and abideth

Contrasts
not always
contradic-
tions.

for ever. Like its Author, it knoweth no variableness nor shadow of turning.

"The Holy Scripture contains within itself all treasures of wisdom and knowledge; but only renders up those treasures by little and little, as they are needed and asked for."¹

"It was a necessity—a hard, iron, unavoidable necessity—that made men in the times of Arius and Pelagius, of Tetzel and Voltaire, to search the treasures which the Body of Christ has received stored up in the Bible; the Spirit of truth, always at work, was especially working at times like those, leading the disciples of our Lord of later date further into the realms of that truth, of which Christ possesses the master key."²

The completeness and sufficiency of Holy Scripture.

The canon of Scripture was closed with the last inspired writer of the New Testament. It is absurd to suppose that the truth embodied in the sacred books can undergo any alteration. A *growth in* Scripture itself is inconceivable. A *germination of* divine seeds dropped into human minds and hearts—that is something essentially different, though often thoughtlessly confounded with the former. The labours of learned and thoughtful men, in the investigation of the Bible, must never be imagined to have gone for nothing. Students have dug under the surface, they have driven shafts into mines of wondrous wealth, they have brought to the surface "gold and silver and precious stones," and we of the nineteenth century have grown richer in divine stores through sanctified human toil.

The growth of the knowledge of Scripture

"Other men laboured, and we have entered into their labours." The abiding Comforter was promised to lead

The fruits of human study.

¹ Trench's *Hulsean Lect.*, 1845, No. viii.

² Swainson on the *Creeds*, p. 99.

Proofs of
the Spirit's
teaching
and
guidance.

Christ's disciples into all truth; and studies through nineteen centuries, devoutly pursued by those in whom this spirit has dwelt, yield results in which we should rejoice. When the mind of the Church has been ripened to accept certain formulated results of study, when large numbers of Christians are led to recognize truths deduced from divine oracles, a proof of divine guidance is to be found in the adaptation of such results to the needs and the aspirations of advancing time, as well as in their general correspondence with the teachings of Holy Writ.

I.

THE UNITY AND FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

TRUE conceptions on these subjects must be at the basis of all religion.

There is in human nature a desire to pass beyond material facts. It says—and though the languages be many, the meaning is one—"There is something beyond what I see, and hear, and touch—something invisible, mightier than winds and waters, more glorious than sun, moon, and stars. It must have a life infinitely above my own." And what means this deeply-seated conviction, but that the natural is related to the *supernatural*? That the latter is as true and real as the former.

The
relation of
the natural
to the super-
natural.

Nature is not the sum total of existence. Throughout historic time, in all discovered lands, an idea, such as we have now indicated, lies hidden in the soul of man, or rather is expressed in forms manifold and varied. The most barbarous tribes believe in a power superior to nature's forces, above the rain clouds high up in the Heaven of heavens. The dreams of eastern nations tell of mysterious abodes and beings beyond the sight of mortals ; and the fantastic imaginings of Norsemen do the same. Greek sages, and others, discoursed of the absolute, the infinite, the unchangeable. Mystic pagan thinkers were of old ; and still they remain in their ancient lands, bearing testimony to the supernatural. Affecting it is to see men of all climates and ages climbing up, as it were, to look out from the world's loftiest pinnacles, upon prospects which baffle every effort of their straining gaze to penetrate the mystery.

Now upon turning from heathendom to Christendom, whilst a belief in the supernatural is common to both, what a contrast is presented between the conceptions of the supernatural as they obtain in the two cases. The doctrine of one God, a personal Spirit, the Father of men—how this dawns in the beginning of the Bible, and goes on shining, “more and more, unto the perfect day.” Though in some points which closely touch the central light, there are, in Christendom, diver-

The
universal
belief in a
higher
power.

The
Christian
conception
of the super-
natural.

sities of apprehension, yet the remaining consensus of believing thought inspires thankfulness and praise.

The unity
of God the
character-
istic
revelation
of the Old
Testament.

Scripture makes all the difference in this respect between pagans and ourselves. The unity of God is the characteristic revelation of the Old Testament. “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.”¹ The spirituality of His nature was suggested by an absence of visible representations of Him in the Holy of holies. It was sublimely declared by Jesus to the woman of Samaria by Jacob’s well, “God is a Spirit;”² and the Divine Fatherhood comes out in answer to Malachi’s question, “Have we not all one Father?”³ more clearly still, in the teaching of our Lord’s prayer.

God “the everlasting One”—God “a Spirit”—God “the Father.” So is He recognized in the creeds of Christendom. “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;” these are opening words in the simplest and most venerable of Christian confessions. “We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things, visible and invisible,” so cry the creeds of Jerusalem, of Cæsarea, and of Antioch in the fourth century, when an age of most violent controversy troubled the Christian Church. The same was the united utterance of the fathers at

The creeds
of the
fourth
century.

¹ Deut. vi. 4.

² John iv. 24.

³ Mal. ii. 10.

Nicæ (A.D. 325).¹ Orthodox Greeks still adopt the same symbol. So does the Roman Catholic Church. The first article of the Church of England says,

“There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, both visible and invisible.”

The Westminster Confession, the Declarations of Independents and Baptists, the standards of Wesleyanism and other Methodist branches are of one accord with these patristic utterances; and in communities which put forth no such formulæries the faith is just the same.

It is but proper here to notice a recent controversy,² which is an example of agreement in one comprehensive respect, while it is an example of difference in another. Until, of late, there were no controversies touching the Divine Fatherhood, now some difference obtains, yet underneath there is union. Two classes of texts relate to this subject—those which touch a common divine relationship to mankind, and those which touch a peculiar divine relationship to believers. We are all His offspring, said St. Paul, quoting from a Greek poet; our Lord's parable of the prodigal son recognises the continued Fatherhood of the Almighty to those who have wandered from the

The first
article of
the Church
of England.

Other
doctrinal
standards.

Two classes
of texts
relating
to the
Fatherhood
of God.

¹ Schaff's *Creeds of the Greek and Latin Churches*, 28-35.

² See *Cunningham Lectures on the Fatherhood of God*, by Dr. Candlish; and *The Fatherhood of God*, by Dr. Crawford.

Father's House and played the prodigal. On the other hand, we read, that to as many as receive "the true Light," "the Word made flesh," to them is given power or authority to *become* the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.¹ St. Paul, writing to the Romans, says—

"Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Some, overlooking, or not paying sufficient attention to the latter of these passages, have given undue prominence to the former, and forced them beyond what appears to be their true meaning; others, absorbed in contemplating the special sonship of believers, go so far as to deny the fatherly relation of God to men at large. Both extremes verge on danger; but, after all, when verbal dust has been swept away, there remains this agreement—first, that God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life; and secondly, that the privilege of "adoption," and the consciousness of it, through the witness of the Spirit, pertains to those, and those only, who are "born again"—"born from above."

Undue
stress laid
upon one
or other
class of
texts.

Points of
agreement.

¹ John i. 12, 13.

Here then, as we have said, we find an instance, and there are many such, in which two sides of revelation are, in theological description, separated from each other. Both are divine, both are true. There is no inconsistency between them. But, looking on different sides of the divine relationship to His creatures, theologians fall into the mistake of dwelling upon them, so as on one side to deduce a formula of doctrine opposed to a formula deduced on the other. Between these two sides of the Scripture shield there is perfect harmony.

Views founded on both classes of texts true.

Perfect harmony between them.

II.

THE CONDITION OF MAN.

THE prevalence of evil in the world was obvious ages ago ; yet there was no adequate conception of the turpitude of sin, no just estimate of human guilt, and no sufficient apprehension of its consequences, except amongst those who possessed a divine revelation on the subject. The Jews, as appears from the Book of Psalms, had convictions of personal sinfulness, such as contemporaries of other races could not feel. Wrongs endured by the latter touched them to the quick ; but their own misdoings lay lightly on their consciences. Confessions of sin, sorrows of repentance, and struggles against evil were peculiar to a people who

Convictions of personal sinfulness in the Book of Psalms.

received light from heaven. They were pointed back to the innocence of paradise, and to the tragedy of the fall. The New Testament unfolded still more affecting views of man's wickedness and misery; for He who came to seek and to save that which was lost, taught more impressively than had been done before, the depth and darkness of the estate from which He worked out full redemption.

New
Testament
views of
human
wickedness
and misery.

The effect of
our Lord's
revelation
of sin.

The
doctrine of
sin not
much
studied in
early times.

The effect of our Lord's revelation of human sin was soon apparent in the Church; and the world was startled by outcries of godly sorrow on the part of those who were "pricked to the heart" by apostolic appeals;¹ but a deep study of divine teaching on this subject does not appear in early Christian literature. The doctrine of sin did not excite as much attention as the doctrine of salvation. The remedy was received with joy, before the healed ones thoroughly examined the fell disorder from which they had been restored. The Greek and Latin fathers differed to some extent in conclusions which they reached, while attempting to systematize this part of truth. They formulated ideas as to the extent of mischief which the fall had inflicted, as to the operation of human will in producing evil, and in accepting its remedy. Questions arose relative to original sin, and to the initiation in human experience of that redemptive process which is revealed by the Gospel. The

Questions
relating
to original
sin.

¹ Acts ii. 37.

West went further than the East in an investigation of the fall and its effects; and Augustine laid the foundation of doctrines which have ever since more or less marked the theology of European Christendom.

Augustine's influence on theology.

As we place later creeds side by side, we are struck with their resemblance to each other in representing the condition of human beings.

The Lutherans at Augsburg in 1530 declared in their confession that man has free will, and yet has no power to work out the righteousness of God without the Spirit of God. It was chiefly because of the spread of Lutheranism that the Council of Trent held its sittings. But when we turn to a decree on original sin, passed in the fifth session held in 1546, we find the fathers condemning any one who asserts "That the sin of Adam—which in its origin is one, and being transfused into all by propagation, not by imitation, is in each one as his own—is taken away either by the powers of human nature, or by any other remedy than the merit of the one Mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath reconciled us to God in His own blood, being made unto us justice, sanctification, and redemption."¹ The Church of England decides in its 19th Article (1563), "That original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, but is the fault and corruption of every man;" "he is very far gone

The Augsburg Confession.

The Council of Trent on original sin.

The nineteenth article of the Church of England.

¹ Schaff's *Creeds of the Greek and Latin Churches*, 85.

from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil ; ” and “ man cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength to good works, faith, and calling upon God.”

The
teaching
of the
Westminster
Confession.

Methodist
views as
taught by
John
Wesley.

The Westminster Confession (1647) says, “ From original corruption ” “ do proceed all actual transgressions.”¹ Methodist views on the subject, as taught by John Wesley in his sermons and notes on the New Testament, vary in some respects from the Westminster Confession, but they clearly teach man’s fall from original righteousness. Congregationalists, in their Declaration of 1838, professed

Declaration
of the
Congrega-
tionalists.

“ They believe that man was created after the Divine image, sinless, and in his kind perfect; they believe that the first man disobeyed the Divine command, fell from his state of innocence and purity, and involved all his posterity in the consequences of that fall. They believe that, therefore, all mankind are born in sin, and that a fatal inclination to moral evil, utterly incurable by human means, is inherent in every descendant of Adam.”²

Some passages bearing on the doctrine of sin in different creeds are not consistent one with another. But in substance the statements, when impartially interpreted, are found to be harmonious; it is to be remembered that in communities where creeds are not professed, the fall of man and the sinfulness of all Adam’s posterity are acknowledged.

Looking over Christian literature produced in different countries, we discover an immense amount

¹ Schaff’s *Creeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches*, p. 616.

² *Congregational Year Book*.

of philosophical speculation pertaining to the department of study now under notice. Divines have pried into every corner of the domain. They have inquired into the meaning and consequences of Adam's fall, into the original constitution of human nature, and into the extent to which sin has affected it. The meaning of the word "depravity" has been turned round and round; exaggerations have been pushed to the extreme by some, and qualifications have been added by the ingenuity of others. The question of liberty has been keenly discussed, and distinctions made between the freedom *of the will* as a distinct faculty in human nature, and the freedom *of man* as a personal agent taken altogether. Yet it is from this enormous amount of intellectual activity that we have picked out items just tabulated, from which it appears very remarkable that such a consensus should have existed through so many ages, side by side with various differences.

Movements of modern thought have no doubt rudely affected what is called the religious world, and large numbers on the outskirts of Christianity, who tenaciously cling to the Christian name, do not accept such teachings as we have indicated. But it is otherwise with those who are powerfully affected by Divine revelation. Many who are indisposed to bow to any one of the creeds just specified, and who object to several of the ex-

Speculations concerning the fall and sin

The word "de-pravity."

The question of liberty.

The religious world disturbed by movements of modern thought.

Sentiments
on the
subject of
sin imbibed
from
reading the
Psalms and
the Epistles
of St. Paul.

pressions they contain, have, nevertheless, from reading the Psalms and the Epistles of St. Paul, imbibed sentiments on the subject of sin which are in full accordance with those of evangelical divines in all churches.

III.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

The
history of
Christ in
the Apostles'
Creed.

WHAT is called "the Apostles' Creed" gives an outline of the history of Christ, rather than the full doctrine respecting Him. That doctrine is the subject of apostolic exposition as we find it in the New Testament, and it is throughout based upon facts recorded by evangelists. The doctrine would be impossible without the facts; the facts would be deficient in meaning without the Epistles. There is unity of belief amongst Christians all over the world, respecting what we find related of Christ in the oldest Confessions; and the unity of faith as to the doctrine of Christ is far more prevalent still, than those who have not studied the records of theological opinion are apt to admit. In order that we may exhibit it as far as it goes, it is necessary to indicate, beyond what we have done in previous sections, certain differences surrounding a central agreement.

Unity of
belief
respecting
what we
find related
of Christ in
the oldest
Confessions.

The doctrine of Christ includes His divine

nature, His human incarnation, and His redemptive work.

1. *His Divine nature.* The exordium of St. John's Gospel places before us in few words, the fact of *who* He was, and also *what* He was. The apostle probably was acquainted with philosophical speculation, as to a Divine Logos or Word. He did not build his doctrine on those speculations. He received that from his Master, and his Master's promised spirit. Yet, he had them in view, we apprehend, when he took up his pen to write the fourth Gospel, and he intended to place the revelation he had received, in contrast with imperfect and shadowy dreams of Alexandrian theorists. He authoritatively declares what he knew on the subject. He puts aside mere hypotheses, and declares, with a calm confidence, that there is a true Logos, a Word such as philosophers never dreamt of, a Word divine, real, blessed, speaking to men evermore.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

The source of the utterance warrants full confidence in its authority. Here comes out a fact like the sun, dark with excess of light. The effulgence so dazzles, that, as we look on the vision, we have to shade our eyes.

The
Johannine
doctrine of
Christ.

Contrast
with
Alexandrian
theories.

The
declaration
of the true
Logos.

The effect
of St. John's
teaching.

Two early
tendencies
of belief.

Their
collision at
the Nicene
crisis.

The Word is divine. “With God,” yea “God” Himself; though with a distinction, He is essentially One with the fountain of all being, all life. Well might such pregnant phraseology set Christians thinking, laying hold on intellects and hearts, year after year, age after age—so that for centuries they could pay attention to little else. Other texts of Scripture they gathered together, and wove into one whole round this oracle—the middlemost of all inspired lessons given them to study. “*With God,*” they said to themselves, here is *distinction*.—“*Was God*” they proceeded to conclude, here is *equality*. These were the pivots round which the minds of Christian fathers turned for three hundred years. They had little time, little inclination, to dwell on the mystery of sin, they lost themselves in wonder and love as they contemplated this mystery of Christ. Two tendencies of belief appeared early, one rising supremely to the *union* between “Logos” and “Father,” the other resting chiefly on the *distinction* between the two. “*Was God,*” there is identity; exclaimed one class.—“*With God,*” there is distinguishableness, exclaimed the other. The two tendencies came into collision at the Nicene crisis. The former tendency overcame the latter; out of the first came the doctrine of Athanasius. The Son, he said, is of the same substance as the Father; out of the second came the doctrine of Arius, which denied this co-

essence, and reduced the Son to the condition of a creature, although very exalted and glorious.

Arius, is believed by many competent historical theologians, to have been influenced by philosophical speculations derived from heathen sources, then prolific and influential, when he denied what is termed the consubstantiality of the Son—His Divine uncreated co-existent essence ; yet Arius employed most exalted terms to denote His dignity and glory, and his phraseology at times approaches that of the orthodox.

What Athanasius believed is expressed in the Nicene creed. All the orthodox, East and West, adopted it. Athanasianism may be said after a sharp struggle to have reigned, but Arianism prevailed for a while over Christendom. It had its divisions, whilst the Athanasians prescribed a united front.

Some semi-Arians were less far removed from orthodoxy than others, they would not adopt language which signifies distinctly one substance with the Father ; they said they believed the Son was of *like* substance with the Father. Other Arians lagged far behind.¹ Metaphysical minds, on both sides of the momentous question, betook themselves to intellectual refinements which the generality of Christians could not fully understand ; between them, and indeed amongst those

Arius
influenced
by heathen
philosophy

The
faith of
Athanasius
expressed
in the
Nicene
creed.

The
position
of some
semi-Arians

Extreme
Arians.

¹ The original history of the controversy is supplied by Socrates (A.D. 324-340), Sozomen (324-340), and Theodoret (322-428).

The doctrine of our Lord's Divinity re-established by Athanasius.

who were nominally mixed with the semi-Arian ranks, there is historical ground for believing some might be found who accepted Jesus Christ as the Divine and only Saviour of mankind. In a very decided spirit, not sacrificing what he believed to be true, the great Athanasius, supported by Hilary, bishop of Poictiers, finally re-established the doctrine of our Lord's true and proper Divinity.¹

2. The incarnation of the Word in Jesus Christ is explicitly asserted by the Apostle John :—

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”²

Discussions concerning the relations of the human to the Divine nature in the person of Christ.

As the Nicene theologians had devoted themselves to the inquiry, What is the relation of the Word to the Father? so theologians afterwards went on to ask, What is the relation of the human to the Divine nature in the person of Christ? How is humanity united to Divinity? What is the effect of the union? Where is the centre of personality? Are there two wills, or one? Here also divergent tendencies appeared, the first towards a confusion of the human with the Divine, the

¹ Gibbon acknowledges that the distinctive term employed by Athanasius to denote the Divinity of Christ has been “unanimously received as a fundamental article of the Christian faith by the consent of the Greek, the Latin, the Oriental, and the Protestant Churches.”—*Decline and Fall*, etc., Milman’s Edit. II. 203.

² John i. 14, Revised Version.

second towards a distinction which separated the Divergent tendencies. human from the Divine, so as to make two personalities. The controversy is dreary and nearly unintelligible, and it excited less and less interest, as complications, which only Eastern minds could understand, hastened the wearisome discussion to its end. Traces of it, however, remain in some Oriental sects.

Greek, Roman, and some Anglican divines regard the orthodox results of these controversies respecting the nature and person of our Lord as the *ne plus ultra* of theological attainment on the subject. Some Americans concur in this opinion. On the contrary, certain acute German thinkers have criticised these formulas as insufficient, and are ready to re-open the investigation; whether they will do any thing better than their predecessors remains to be seen. In the meanwhile a large number of thoughtful men look upon minute definitions of the union between the Father and the Word, and between Divinity and humanity, as a presumptuous plunge into an unfathomable mystery.

The orthodox results of these controversies.Definitions of the union between the Father and the Word.

Another kindred point of inquiry has, especially in later times, attracted much attention, namely, that respecting the sense in which we are to take the words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians ii. 7. In our Authorized Version we read "made Himself of no reputation," in the Revised Version "emptied Himself," the Greek word being *εκένωσεν*. Hence

The sense of the words "emptied Himself."

the agitation of the question is termed the *Kenotic* controversy. It is asked, how did He who was in the form of God *empty* Himself? and Continental divines have set themselves to answer the inquiry. Some explain that the pre-existent Logos, after the Incarnation, suppressed the manifestation of omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience; others believe in the pre-existence of the soul of Christ, and that a change in its condition is intended by the Apostle. There are other theories on the same subject; and what we now state is intended to show, what an amount of keen thoughtfulness has gathered round the Christology of the New Testament. How remarkable therefore is the unison of belief respecting our Lord's Divinity and Humanity, which, *amidst all these differences*, has obtained, and still obtains, the consent of Christendom. The agreement which prevails appears the more valuable when viewed in connection with surrounding diversities. And moreover it should be recollect ed that, except amongst the old subtle-minded Greeks, these controversies never had any fast hold on Christendom; as it regards the Kenotic discussion that is confined to a few theologians, chiefly German scholars.

Coincidences of belief since the Reformation may be thus stated. The Augsburg Confession speaks of two natures, Divine and human, being inseparably conjoined in unity of person—so con-

Theories respecting the “self-emptying.”

Unison of belief in our Lord's Divinity and Humanity amid all differences.

Coincidences of belief since the Reformation.

joined as not to be confounded. The Council of Trent adheres to the early orthodox creeds. The Helvetic Confession corresponds with the Lutheran. The Church of England, in its second article, declares that the Godhead and manhood were joined together in one person so as never to be divided. The Westminster Confession uses in chapter viii. the following expressions,

“The Son of God, the second Person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon Him man’s nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin.”

Symbols of other evangelical denominations, including the Baptist, the Wesleyan, and Independent, less scholastic in phraseology, nevertheless harmonize with the earlier ones in substance.

3. The redemptive work of Christ is presented in early patristic literature more in a religious than a theological form. It was not subjected to scientific analysis, but accepted in a devotional temper, Scripture language respecting the priesthood and sacrifice of the Redeemer being commonly employed. Language, scarcely amounting to a theory, in reference to Christ’s delivery of sinners from captivity to Satan, occasionally occurs, which is difficult to explain ; but when we study the writings of Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the eleventh century, we find there an elaborate

The
Council of
Trent.

The
Helvetic
Confession.

The Church
of England.

The
Westminster
Confession.

The
Baptist,
Wesleyan,
and Con-
gregational-
alist
symbols.

The
Priesthood
and
Sacrifice
of Christ
accepted
in a
devotional
spirit
in early
patristic
literature.

The argument of Anselm.

argument, showing that Christ by His sacrifice and obedience made an adequate satisfaction to Divine justice for the pardon of sin.¹ This view was widely accepted by mediæval theologians, and appears distinctly, after the Reformation, in the writings of Protestant and Puritan authors.

Thorndike and Bull.

Anglo-Catholics, Thorndike and Bull for example, teach that salvation is through the satisfaction of Christ, who by His propitiatory sacrifice paid the ransom of human souls; that Christ's submission to death consummated His meritorious obedience, and that His obedience, satisfying Divine justice, alone is the efficacious cause of eternal life.² Different opinions as to the application of the Atonement were entertained by English theologians, but all the orthodox and evangelical were united in a belief of its infinite worth and sufficiency. The Articles of the Church of England, the Westminster Confession, the Standards of Methodism, and the Congregational Declaration of Faith are all in harmony with each other in this cardinal doctrine.

Harmony with reference to this doctrine.

We may add that the Council of Trent, whilst it asserted particular doctrines, which were protested against by a large part of Christendom at the

¹ See Present Day Tract, No. 44, *The Doctrine of the Atonement*; also Translation of *Cur Deus Homo?* published by the R.T.S.

² We have here followed the language in Thorndike's Works vol. III., and Bull's *Harmonia Apostolica*, p. 10, etc.

Reformation,—at the same time recognized the sacrifice accomplished on the cross, though it fondly and unscripturally imagined it to be repeated in the offering of mass. Nevertheless to the Redeemer Himself, the Trentine Creed attributed the salvation of man.

The doctrine
of the
Council
of Trent.

IV.

PERSONALITY AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE Spirit of God is spoken of in connection with the world's creation as moving over the face of the waters, and as striving with men in days before the flood.¹ He spake to David, and His word was in the tongue of the Psalmist;² prayer for His gracious and sanctifying presence is offered in the confession of the sinning and suppliant prince. The prophets refer to this Divine Being again and again; but it is in the New Testament that we find the fullest revelation of His person and work. He is the subject of our Lord's memorable promise, which since His ascension has been the comfort of the Church. In the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles which follow, we have repeated allusions to the existence, power, and grace of the Holy Ghost. His Deity and personality are indicated so as to convince all Christians, with

The
Spirit in
creation.

In the
prophets

The
subject of
our Lord's
promise.

His
Deity and
personality.

¹ Genesis i. 2; vi. 3.

² 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.

References
to the
Spirit in
the early
Fathers.

few exceptions, of His abiding presence, for the illumination and sanctification of believers. References are made to the Comforter, chiefly in Scripture phrases, by early fathers ; but no doctrinal exposition appears before the Nicene period ; then His name is introduced as the third Person of the blessed Trinity.

Reverence
and awe of
patristic
writers in
speaking of
the Holy
Spirit.

Perhaps one reason may be found in the fact, that in an age when the boldest treatment of the doctrine of Christ prevailed, and it became a subject of general conversation, remarkable reverence seems to have been felt respecting language used in Scripture touching the mystery of the blessed Spirit. Indications of this reverence and awe are found in patristic writers of that age. At the Council of Constantinople (381), more precise definitions of the doctrine appeared, and the Spirit is described as proceeding from the Father.

The
procession
of the Holy
Spirit.

After a time disagreement arose as to what is termed the *procession* of the Spirit. The Constantinopolitan decree had said the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father; afterwards came an addition—"and the Son." If by "procession" had been meant that the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church is to be ascribed to God and to Christ, (according to our Lord's words, 'Whom the Father will send in My name ;'¹ and again, 'If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you ; but

¹ John xiv. 26.

if I go, I will send Him unto you,')"¹—there would have been no room for controversy on the subject, since the whole Christian Church were agreed on that point. But the procession in question related to the mode of the Divine existence, the secret essence of the Godhead, and an excitement arose on the subject akin to what occurred in respect to the inner relation of the Son to the Father. The controversy at length severed the Eastern and Western Churches ; yet it is very remarkable that all the while both Churches believed that the Holy Ghost is Divine, sent by the Father, in the name of the Son ; indeed, sent by the Son Himself.

Unity of faith after all is seen underlying this discussion, with respect to a fact, the explanation of which must always remain an inscrutable secret.

The Trinity continued to be a subject of thought to Western theologians down to the Reformation ; but it was more in the way of calm meditation than of personal controversy. Vain endeavours were made in quiet hours to reach clear ideas of the ineffable nature ; but there were some wise enough to see how hopeless is the effort to define the incomprehensible.

Faith in the Holy Spirit as "Lord and Giver of life" has long been universally confessed, and the repetition of the Creed embodying these words,

The point in controversy.

Severance between the Eastern and Western Churches.

Efforts to attain clear ideas of the Trinity

The Holy Spirit as the "Lord and Giver of Life" universally confessed.

¹ John xvi. 7.

Sacramental theories.

The presence and work of the Spirit recognised in spite of them.

The preaching of Tauler.

conveys an impression of extensive unity amongst Christians in general. Sacramental theories have sadly beclouded the Scripture revelation of the Spirit's work ; some of them are mischievous in the extreme ; but it is a comfort to remember that in these cases, His sanctifying operations are in a manner still recognized. Material water can never make clean the human heart, only the living water springs up into everlasting life. But the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, as rising above all visible ordinances, have not been forgotten by many who have lived and died in Churches marked by a ceremonial which others deplore. For example we turn to the sermons of John Tauler, a Dominican of the fourteenth century : preaching from our Lord's promise of the Comforter, he explains how the Holy Ghost reproves the world of sin, "and maketh a man to judge himself." How "He reproves us for our self-righteousness," showing it is "as filthy rags ;" and how He reproveth men for their judgment of others, and teaches the spirit in which they "should administer rebuke." The preacher unfolds the sense in which the Holy Ghost will "teach all things," and warns against "stopping at the sign in the Holy Sacraments, instead of reaching after the eternal truth signified." He points out those who are hindered from receiving the Holy Ghost by looking only to the humanity of Christ, and insists upon it that "the

light of nature must be swallowed up in the light of grace.”¹

Since the Reformation attention has been generally turned away from inquiries in relation to the mode of the Spirit’s existence; and His work on human minds for their enlightenment and sanctification has chiefly occupied the thoughts of divines and given a tone to their teaching. The Augsburg Confession in 1530, Art. xviii., declares that man’s will has no power to work the righteousness of God or a spiritual righteousness without the Spirit of God, because the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; the Homily of the Church of England (1562) for Whit-sunday, treats of the coming down of the Holy Ghost, and the manifold gifts of the same. The copious Orthodox Confession of the Eastern Church (1643),² largely describes the fruits of the Spirit, founding the enumeration on Gal. v. 22; and the Westminster Confession (1647), chapter x., ascribes effectual calling to the Word and Spirit of God, taking away the heart of stone, and giving a heart of flesh, renewing the wills of men, and turning them to what is good. John Wesley and other great denominational leaders and representative divines, have in their published works dwelt largely upon the Spirit’s work; and Christian

The en-lightening and sanc-tifying work of the Holy Spirit.

The Augsburg Confession.

Homily of the Church of England.

The Eastern Church.

Westminster Confession.

John Wesley.

¹ *Life and Sermons of Tauler*, translated by S. Winkworth, xvi.-xvii.

² Schaff’s *Creeds of the Greek and Latin Churches*, p. 356.

hymnology abounds in adoring invocations of the Divine Comforter.

V.

SALVATION BY FAITH.

“WITHOUT faith it is impossible to please God.”

The place of
faith in
Christianity.

The place of faith in the forefront of Divine requirements is distinctive of Scriptural religion. There is no other religion in the world which presents the same character. We are so familiar with it that we are hardly struck with the contrast it affords to systems existing through long ages, all over heathendom. They require the performance of rites and ceremonies, without insisting upon the obedience of mind and heart. Intellect and affection are left uncultured, and they consequently yield only the thorns and thistles of impure imaginations and destructive passions. But the aim of Revelation is to create in us a new inner life, a life of intelligent apprehension, of earnest conviction of moral and spiritual principle,—in short, a vigorous impulsive power, which shall raise us above the sensual, the visible, and the transitory. The noblest systems of moral philosophy are those which call attention, not so much to particular actions as to the motives out of which right actions rise. Virtue is not an outward conformity to utilitarian rules, but an inward striving after

The aim of
Revelation.

Systems
of moral
philosophy.

what is good, according to a fixed purpose, which rests upon settled convictions; and whilst all heathen religion and philosophy insists upon human merit, and makes that the basis of truth and hope—the Gospel sweeps the idea of meritoriousness away, and proclaims that by grace we are saved through faith. After all, the faith required by the Bible is in harmony with the highest ethical teachings.

The faith required in the Bible.

It lays its foundation, not on the shifting sands of expediency and fashion, but on the eternal rock of faith in God. There is a beautiful unity in the Scripture doctrine of faith from beginning to end. Abraham was father of all who believe. By faith, he, and all the heroes enumerated in the magnificent roll of spiritual nobility, preserved in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “ wrought righteousness.” “ The just shall live by his faith,”¹ is the pregnant lesson of the Hebrew prophet, Habakkuk; and these few words are transplanted into the New Testament three distinct times, making seed-plots, out of which Martin Luther and many more have gathered harvests for the nourishing and enrichment of Christ’s universal Church. Controversies about faith, or rather the relation it sustains to justification and holiness, have been rife in past ages, and have not died out yet; but at the heart of them, there lies a great deal of common Christian truth, which it is de-

The unity in the Scripture doctrine of faith.

Common Christian truth at the heart of controversies about faith.

¹ Habakkuk ii. 4, R.V.

sirable, though sometimes difficult, to disentangle from its surroundings.

The views of primitive believers.

As in other cases, so in this, the views of primitive believers respecting salvation were religious rather than theological. They regarded salvation as a whole, without distinguishing between its two sides; the one, our acceptance with God; the other, our holiness of life. A sentence in Cyprian gives the pith of their creed:

Their views according to Cyprian.

"Every one who believes in God and lives in faith is found just: and long since in faithful Abraham is shown to be blest and justified."¹

All Christians were convinced that they were saved by grace through faith, though they failed to distinguish between things that differ. Augustine did not distinguish between justification and holiness; and he mistily speaks of grace by which we are justified as identical with the infusion of Divine love.² It is easy to point out differences between patristic and later theologians, whilst all accepted the doctrine that grace is the source, and faith the instrument of salvation.

Augustine's confusion between justification and holiness.

Melanchthon on Augustine.

There is much wisdom in Melanchthon's remark on Augustine—that his opinion was "more pertinent and fit and convenient when he disputed not, than when he did."³

¹ Epistles 63.

² See Shedd's *History of Christian Doctrine*, ii. 255.

³ Luther's *Table Talk*.

Luther investigated the matter in a way not attempted before ; and the outcome is given in the 20th Art. of the Augsburg Confession : Luther's investigations.

“Our works cannot reconcile God, or deserve remission of sins, grace, and justification at His hands ; but these we obtain by faith only when we believe that we are received into favour for Christ’s sake.”

It is a mistake to suppose that at the Reformation all who remained in the Romish Church opposed the doctrine of justification by faith. At the Council of Trent, we learn from the Bishop of Belcastro that there were some who contended against the doctrine of justification by works, affirming that our works were maimed and weak.¹ Justification by faith in the Church of Rome.

Contarini published a Tract² on the doctrine of Justification, in which he states views similar to those of Martin Luther. He was anxious to promote an understanding between Roman Catholics and Lutherans. There were others of the same mind. Even Cardinal Pole, before he became Archbishop of Canterbury, leant some way in the same direction ; and so did a Spanish prelate named Carranza, who accompanied Philip II. to England, when he came to marry Queen Mary. It is said, when he was in London “he preached like Melanchthon,” and used perilous language ; which we can easily believe after reading his memoirs, where we find that he suffered severely Cardinal Pole's leaning to the doctrine.

¹ *Romanism*, by the Rev. R. C. Jenkins, M.A., 106. R.T.S.

² Paris Edition, 1571.

The influence of the Papal Court and the Jesuits on the decrees of Trent.

for opinions he expressed.¹ It seems probable that but for the influence of the Papal Court and the Jesuit order, the canons and decrees of Trent would have been different on the subject of justification from what they are. There was at the time a vast deal of floating opinion in Europe, which, whilst it did not consolidate into Protestantism, appears in harmony with the faith of Reformers.

The doctrinal decrees of Trent.

The Trentine Decree includes an elaborate Treatise of sixteen chapters, and the doctrinal decrees are followed by no less than thirty-three canons or anathemas. There are numerous paragraphs which Protestants cannot fairly object to, since they set forth the insufficiency of the law to justify man.

It is distinctly declared—

The meritorious cause of justification

“The *meritorious* cause is His most beloved, only-begotten Son, who, when we were enemies, for the exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, merited justification for us, by His most holy passion on the wood of the Cross, and made satisfaction for us unto God the Father.”

Moreover, it is affirmed that we are said

Faith the foundation and root of all justification.

“To be justified by faith; because faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and root of all justification, without which it is impossible to please God.”

Happily, there have been in Holland and France Jansenists and Port Royalists who have clung to evangelical orthodoxy on the subject of Divine grace.

¹ See *Spanish Reformers*, p. 186, *et seq.* Religious Tract Society.

We should be careful neither to minimize differences nor to magnify them; and while plucking up tares, not to overlook the wheat amidst which they grow. Many spiritual members of Christ's Church are more Scriptural than their creeds, and with an instinct of true piety they feed upon that which grows out of God's revelation, rejecting, perhaps unconsciously, poisonous plants which the enemy has sown in the field. All evangelical churches cleave, as for their life, to the grand principle of salvation by grace through faith. They repudiate perilous qualifications of this principle, and in their doctrinal articles, confessions, and declarations, also in the works of their representative divines, they exhibit on the whole what is enforced by St. Paul, St. Peter, St. James, St. John, and St. Jude, as the Divine way of salvation.

How to
treat
differences.

Salvation by
grace
through
faith held
by all
evangelical
churches.

VI.

THE FUTURE.

THERE is a wonderful fascination in future possibilities, and they attract the active thoughts of human minds. Accordingly one branch of theological inquiry and belief, known by the name of Eschatology, or the last things, has occupied a large amount of attention, and it forms an interesting chapter in the history of opinion. The

Attention
paid to
Eschatology.

first point which strikes us, as we look at this subject, is the *diversity* of conclusions reached ; the next thing, still more striking, is the extent of *agreement* as to points underlying differences.

The second advent and related subjects.

A wide field opens, when we turn over the annals of Christendom, in search of what divines have written, and people have believed, respecting the second advent of our Lord ; the millennium of His reign, and the glory of the Church during that promised period ; the resurrection of the dead at the last day ; the final judgment of mankind ; and the state of reward and punishment to follow the winding up of this world's history.

The hopes of the early Christians.

The idea of a millennium.

The resurrection of the dead.

For more than two centuries, the second coming of Christ vividly impressed the faithful, and inspired hopes of an approaching end when enemies would be cast down from thrones of power and pride, and truth and righteousness triumph over falsehood and wrong. The idea of a millennium, more beautiful than the pristine age of gold, dreamt of by poets, filled the mind, in some cases with imagery too much akin to earthly things, in others with conceptions more refined and ideal. The resurrection of the dead was confidently expected to take place sooner or later, and materializing and spiritualizing tendencies were active in those who wrote upon the victory over death, promised by our Lord and His apostles. Then came the notion of purifying fires

to burn out the stains of departed souls, and this notion grew until a definite idea of purgatory arose, and ruled the faith of Western Christendom.

The idea of purgatory.

Its prevalence threw into the background for a long period, if it did not extinguish, the hopes of Christ's reign on earth. In after times the end of the world seemed imminent, and portents of the last day were everywhere recognized. Recovered from that panic, Christendom still fixed its gaze upon things not seen and eternal, and an immense amount of speculation obtained respecting the state of souls in the invisible realms. Martyr-saints distinguished above others by crowns of gold, are seen sparkling in early Italian pictures of paradise restored. That paradise inspired the genius of Dante, and in his poem also the abodes of the sinful burn with fearful flames. But at the Reformation we are assured, on competent authority, that

The end of the world.

Martyr-saints.

Dante's poem.

"Protestants and Catholics were in perfect accordance as to the doctrine of the last things, with the exception of the doctrine concerning purgatory. The minor sects also adopted the same views respecting the second advent of Christ to judge the world, and the resurrection of the body. As regards the states of the blessed and the damned, the opinions of different denominations were modified in various ways by their respective creeds; but these differences were not introduced into the symbolical books. Fanatical notions concerning the restitution of all things met with the same fate at the hands of the Lutherans."¹

Agreement of Protestants and Catholics as to the last things.

Several Protestant writers revived millenarianism. The author just quoted goes on to say that during

¹ Hagenbach's *Hist. of Doctrines*, ii. 350.

the last and the present century, Rationalists have "sought to explain away the Scriptural doctrine of the second advent of Christ, and to shorten the duration of the punishments of hell." "Nevertheless, both Rationalists and Supranaturalists retained the doctrine of man's personal existence after death; not only those who believed in a revelation, such as Lavater, but also the principal friends of enlightenment, declared their faith in the world to come."¹

Consensus
of opinion
among
English
Christians.

Opinion now amongst English Christians is varied in reference to the points just specified, but the consensus of belief is larger than superficial appearances may lead some to imagine. We have stated differences in order that we may on the background of them draw lines of unity. We can summarize agreements in reference to this subject under five heads.

The
triumph of
the Church.

The idea of
a church
exclusively
Christian.

1. The final triumph of Christ's spiritual church. The Church idea is perfectly original, revealed in Scripture, and peculiar to the Sacred Volume. Societies, of course, are as common as mankind, but the idea of a society of *this* description is found, and has been entertained, nowhere else. The idea of a Church, visible or invisible, is confined to Christians as such; and in no place, outside, can anything like it be discovered as to the spiritual bond, one in fact of *Divine* kinship, of an inward family life—different from national and political ties. And as the idea is perfectly original and unique, so, with few exceptions, it is universally recognised and maintained. The visi-

¹ Hagenbach's *Hist. of Doctrines*, ii. 461.

ble and invisible Church are sometimes confounded, they are also distinguished ; but, in every case, the conception remains of the whole body of real Christians, without distinction of race, being united as one blessed community in Christ. The conception is universal, or nearly so. And with it exists another —*i.e.*, that of Christ's Church being destined to endure for ever and ever. The perpetuity of it is by no sect denied. It is thought of as one grand procession marching forward to Immanuel's land, and those who share and rejoice in it, sing as they march :

The universality
of the
conception.

“Part of the host have passed the flood,
And part are crossing now.”

A final triumph over all enemies is universally expected by this great “army of the living God.”

2. The consciousness of souls hereafter in a state of blessedness, according to character formed in this present life, is another beautiful expectation to which Christianity gives birth, and it is diffused widely wherever Christianity is known. “To-day shalt thou be in paradise,” and “Absent from the body, at home with the Lord”—are lights hung down from heaven, like silver stars, such as sparkle in a Syrian sky, cheering sufferers on their death-beds, and survivors mourning at the mouth of the sepulchre. The influence of this revelation is confined to no one Church, and with a few individual exceptions, it belongs to all who have

The consciousness
of souls
hereafter.

embraced that gospel which hath brought life and immortality to light.

The resurrection at the last day.

3. The resurrection of the body at the last day, in fulfilment of predictions made by our Lord and His apostles, is a further widespread belief. A mystery envelopes that predicted wonder, and the description given of the glorified body by the Apostle Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, may be said to be dark with excess of light. Theories of the body hereafter, as perfectly identical with the body now, or as contrasted with it, have been, and are still held—hence controversy has arisen—but all, with one accord, say amen to the prophecy,

“Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death shall be swallowed up in victory.”

All believe that death shall be swallowed up in victory.

“Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord” is a benediction coming down on mourners in the nineteenth century like music from the skies; and it harmonizes with the inscriptions, “In Christo, in pace,” rudely cut on the tombstones of the catacombs. The words are repeated at the present day, north and south, from the Greenlander’s snow-covered resting-place to an English cemetery in Australia; and, west and east, from burial parks in the United States, to the Christian grave under an Indian palm.

4. The judgment of all mankind at the end, and the subsequent condition of the righteous and

the wicked, corresponding with sentences pronounced when the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, forms another article of one comprehensive Creed. Viewed apart from particular millennial opinions, a judgment of the dead, small and great, as they stand before God, has been and is accepted as a certainty, and this confession is consentaneous.

The final judgment and its issues.

"We must all appear (or be made manifest) before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."¹

The "great white throne" and the open books² are images which affect the minds and hearts of Christians, and wherever they are realized they inspire the resolve,

"Wherefore we labour, whether present or absent" (which must be understood in the light of the preceding words), "we may be accepted of Him," or be found "well pleasing in His sight."³

5. And finally, the everlasting blessedness of Heaven, the manifestation of the Divine character brighter than ever, and the glory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant — these "last things" constitute the crown and consummation of Christian hope.

The everlasting blessedness in heaven.

An agreement thus far, through past ages, and throughout all lands, where the Gospel obtains, is very wonderful; the more so for the mystery of the subjects, and the controversies which have grown up around them.

¹ 2 Cor. v. 10.

² Rev. xx. 11-12.

³ 2 Cor. v. 9.

VII.

AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

At first sight it appears that little agreement can be found on this important point. Manifold differences come out in controversy with those, on the one hand, who add to the Bible much derived from other sources, and with those, on the other hand, who interpret and criticise the Scriptures in such a way as materially to detract from the compass of their teaching.

The coupling of tradition with Scripture appears at an early date in the history of the Church, and cannot be wondered at in an age close to apostolic times, when, of course, many things not written on the record would be remembered and related by persons who had conversed with the original witnesses. But, in point of fact, we learn from patristic writings that such traditions were in the earliest times employed in proof of the authority of the written Word, and it was held as a principle that nothing in contradiction of it could for one moment be allowed. The conclusive authority of the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Apostolic Epistles, and the Apocalypse, was strenuously upheld by the Christian fathers; and these works

Manifold
differences

Tradition
and
Scripture.

The
authority
of the New
Testament
Scriptures
upheld by
the
Christian
Fathers.

were appealed to as decisive, in cases where contrariety of opinion arose. Doubts were entertained as to the canonicity of some of the Books in our New Testament, but at length they were received as divine by common consent. Traditions grew and spread, as time rolled on ; they added a great deal out of harmony with Scripture, indeed contradictory to it ; but the latter was still upheld as the rule of faith, and the former gained influence through persevering attempts to show that they were not inconsistent with Holy Writ. Different views of inspiration gradually arose ; what are commonly called rationalistic modes of interpretation were adopted ; and, at the present day, are, alas ! on the increase ; but whilst this is to be deplored, it must not be forgotten, that, even by some rationalists, a divine revelation of truth is believed to be *in* the Bible, and that no other book in the world is to be compared with it. Indeed, in spite of free handling, the Book occupies at the present day in Europe, America, and other parts of the world, a position such as it never did before. Translated into 250 languages and dialects, and circulated in millions of copies, it is unparalleled in honour and in influence.

Faith in the Scriptures was early required as a necessary condition of fellowship. To the Bible was assigned a position of supreme authority at the council of Nicæa. In all controversies,

Doubts as to
canonicity
of some
books.

Differing
views of
inspiration.

The
position of
the Bible in
the world
to-day.

The Council
of Nicæa on
the
authority of
the Bible.

Translations and vernacular versions of Scripture.

doctrinal and ecclesiastical, this was acknowledged to be the highest law. Translations of Scripture into different languages were made at an early period, and vernacular versions were not forbidden by Church authority until shortly before the Reformation. A competent writer goes so far as to say—

“If there is any single point in which the fathers may be said to be unanimous, it is in the assertion of the absolute sufficiency of the Scriptures as revealing all necessary doctrine, both of faith and practice, and in their repudiation of every claim of authority for themselves in their interpretation of the text of Scripture.”¹

The point in question at the Council of Trent.

The inspiration and authority of Scripture was not in dispute at the Trentine Council, the point in question was the relation in which tradition stood to it. The Vulgate text was absurdly adopted as authoritative, though, as all scholars admit, it differs from the original.

The Reformation gave the Bible its true place.

It was the glory of the Reformation to give to the Bible its true place as the final and infallible standard of belief, by which all religious opinions must be tested; and Martin Luther and William Tyndale laid the German and English speaking peoples under everlasting obligation by their vernacular versions of the divine oracles.

The Belgic Confession.

There is a general consensus of faith as to divine Scripture in the evangelical creeds of Christendom. The Belgic Confessions, 1531, may be cited as an example.

¹ Jenkyn's *Romanism*, 71.

"We confess that this Word of God was not sent nor delivered by the will of man, but that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

"We believe that these Holy Scriptures fully contain the truth of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein."

The sixth article of the Church of England is equally explicit.

The sixth article of the Church of England.

"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation : so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

All Protestants of every class appeal to the Scriptures as the divine authority for Christian faith.

Notions have been entertained respecting divine influence on the reason of man, so as to push down from its supreme throne the written word of God, and in this direction mystics have rushed into wild excesses.

Mystic excesses.

Many Christians, who have their own ideas as to spiritual reason and the inner light, nevertheless retain a profound reverence for the written Word. The Society of Friends, though sometimes suspected by other communities, are most devout readers of the Word of God, and appeal to it in support of their distinctive views, whilst they are foremost among the zealous friends of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The relation of the Society of Friends to the Bible.

As we close this imperfect review of the past history and present state of theology, it is well to

Differences
not unim-
portant.

remark that nothing contained in this Tract is to be construed as meaning that differences outside the circle of such consent as we have endeavoured to point out and establish, are quite unimportant. By no means. All truth is precious, "more precious than gold," and therefore its minutest particles should never be cast aside as unworthy of regard. But the errors of good men are to be dealt with charitably; and the lesson of St. Paul in the thirteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, demands and deserves our vigilant attention whenever we are engaged in controversy. At the same time let us remember that a law of proportion is to be observed in our estimates of theological opinions. Some things are essential, and other things, not altogether unimportant, are unessential. Rightly to measure the difference between them in certain cases is very difficult; yet an attempt in that direction is a matter of Christian duty.

The need of
charity.

The law of
proportion.

Unity amid
diversity.

VII.

WE have endeavoured to establish the fact that there is a large amount of unity, sometimes apparent on the surface of creeds, sometimes underlying diversities of apprehension in the minds of studious individuals; but beyond all this it becomes us to take notice of a deeper and more

precious unity still, in the experiences of spiritual life and in the utterances of devout affections.

Unity in
spiritual life
and devout
affection.

Christian biography is a fruitful branch of religious literature: it meets the taste, it evokes the sympathy of untold myriads. Augustine's "Confessions," the inner life of Bernard of Clairvaux, Anselm's "Meditations," Luther's "Table Talk," "The Journals" of George Fox and John Wesley, the "Cardiphonia" and other letters of John Newton; these, and many more works of the same description,¹ accord with what the Bible tells us,

"As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."² "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."³

Names may be discovered belonging to dark eras embedded in neglected chronicles, sparkling with Christian virtue; and it is only fair to assume, from the fact of so many men and women having left no record behind them, for it is impossible that all names should become memories—that there must have lived multitudes of like faith, love, and patience, with those whom the pen of fame or friendship has rescued from oblivion. Through patristic, mediæval, and modern writings there runs an under-current of feeling never found in pagan writings nor in any pages

Bible
statements
confirmed
by Christian
biography.

Multitudes
of whom we
know
nothing
have lived
in faith,
hope, and
patience.

Feeling
finds ex-
pression in
Christian
literature
which is
absent from
Pagan
writings.

¹ See *Short Biographies for the People*, Religious Tract Society and the Lives included in the R.T.S. Library.

² Prov. xxvii. 19. ³ Gal. iii. 27, 28.

*Confessions
of sin.*

of philosophy. Many of those confessions and lamentations of personal and surrounding sin, to which sceptics and partisans are wont to point for their own purposes, do contradict and correct them both ; for these very confessions and lamentations reveal such spiritual sensitiveness to what is wrong, such horror of impurity and selfishness, such a conviction of demerit, such sympathy with a Holy God in abhorrence of wickedness in every shape, as prove more or less a realisation in the writer's mind of the Christian ideal of perfect goodness. Christian unity of this kind is as precious as it has been prevalent.

*Varieties in
spiritual
life—
essential
identity
in all.*

*The
elements of
power in all
Christian
centuries*

*God the
Father.*

It is proper to recognise varieties in spiritual life, but it is incumbent to maintain the identity of essence in them all. Whoever examines the annals of Christianity through eighteen centuries will find the same elements of power at work ; faith in God's Fatherhood, faith in Christ's mediation, faith in the Spirit's renewing and sanctifying grace. Could we converse with believers of an early date, or of a distant country, influenced by education and habits of expression different from our own, there might be much difficulty in arriving at a mutual understanding ; but—getting below metaphysical refinements and æsthetic tastes, forms of worship and modes of ecclesiastical order and discipline,—when each came to speak to the other of God as a personal and ever-present Father,

of Christ the Brother and Redeemer of man, and of the Spirit as dwelling in the souls of the faithful, differences would be toned down, and varieties harmonized, heart would answer to heart, and men divided by time, race, and circumstances would clasp hands and kneel down in love and praise before one cross and one throne.

Christ the
Brother and
Redeemer.
The
indwelling
Spirit.

Of all forms of Christian literature hymnology is foremost and chief as an expression of united faith. From a hymn to Christ the Saviour, composed by Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 200),
Clement's
hymn. down to contemporary hymns familiar to all English congregations, there flows one stream of melody, to the honour and glory of Christ, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his redeemed people; and with it there mingles the recognition of those main truths set forth in the present Tract.

The languages are many, the tone and spirit are one, Greek, Latin, German, French, English, they vary in forms of thought and terms of expression, but the same sentiment runs through them all. Bernard, Luther, Watts, Wesley, and a number of American hymn writers are scarcely distinguishable in this last respect one from another. Take as example the two following: the first by Bernard, the second by Ray Palmer:—

The
prevailing
sentiment
in all hymns
similar.

“Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

Bernard.

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
 Nor can the memory find,
 A sweeter sound than Thy blest Name,
 O Saviour of Mankind !

O hope of every contrite heart !
 O joy of all the meek !
 To those who fall how kind Thou art !
 How good to those who seek !

But what to those who find ? Ah, this
 Nor tongue nor pen can show !
 The love of Jesus, what it is
 None but His loved ones know.

Jesus, our only joy be Thou,
 As Thou our Crown will be.
 Jesus, be Thou our glory now,
 And through Eternity.”

Ray
Palmer.

“ My faith looks up to thee,
 Thou Lamb of Calvary,
 Saviour Divine !
 Now hear me while I pray,
 Take all my guilt away,
 O let me from this day
 Be wholly Thine.
 May Thy rich grace impart
 Strength to my fainting heart,
 My zeal inspire ;
 As Thou hast died for me,
 O may my love to Thee,
 Pure, warm, and changeless be,—
 A living fire.

While life's dark maze I tread
 And griefs around me spread,
 Be Thou my guide ;
 Bid darkness turn to day.
 Wipe sorrow's tears away,
 Nor let me ever stray
 From Thee aside.

When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold sullen stream
 Shall o'er me roll;
Blest Saviour, then in love,
Fear and distrust remove ;
O, bear me safe above,—
 A ransomed soul."

One of the best living hymn writers of the Church of England replied to a Presbyterian Editor, who requested permission to use one of his compositions :—

Reply of a
Church of
England
hymn-
writer to a
Presbyte-
rian editor.

"I gladly give you the permission you ask. It is to me a great pleasure to feel that thus communion amongst God's people is deepened and widened by the circulation of those aspirations to Him which He has put into many hearts, but which has not given all lips equally the power to express. Are not our hymns drawing us all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity nearer to each other every day? It is remarkable how Christians occupying different sections in the great family unite in choosing the same words in which to utter praise."¹

This interchange of hymns is one of the best religious signs of the present age. Some years ago we were sojourning in a Swiss hotel, in company with ministers of different denominations, chiefly representatives of High Church, Low Church, and Broad Church divisions; but, one Sunday evening, we joined in singing hymns composed by various authors within the range of our English Christendom; and cheering was it to find how cheerfully we could all join in common notes of adoration and love to the one glorious Redeemer.

Interchange
of hymns a
sign of the
times.

United
hymn-sing-
ing in a
Swiss hotel.

¹ *Christ in Song : Hymns of Immanuel, selected from All Ages*
by Philip Schaff, D.D.; Preface, p. viii.

A true evangelical alliance.

"This is a true evangelical alliance," exclaimed one of the party. We thought of it as a preparation for singing the new song with the elders before the throne.

Christendom contrasted with non-Christendom in respect to unity of faith.

Local character of non-Christian religions.

There is a vast difference between unity of faith in Christendom, and unity of faith in other religious divisions of mankind. No other system has ever reached the position occupied by Christianity. The circumstances under which it obtained such a width and variety of assent, and rooted its main doctrines in the hearts and lives of men, render its history something perfectly unique. Religious systems in distant lands have no doubt, to a wider numerical extent, won support from the inhabitants of those lands. But the remarkable circumstance is, that such religions have been local in their character, and in their constitution, as well as in their range and influence. They have sprung from a particular soil, they pertain to particular races, and they are thoroughly identified with particular national customs and habits. Idiosyncracies in the minds of the people have laid hold upon observances suited to their tastes; and these observances have been cultivated with an ardour inherent in the nature of the votaries adopting them. This is true of Brahminism and Buddhism. They are local, geographical. They belong to the East, and to the East alone. There they abide and flourish, but beyond certain longi-

Brahminism and Buddhism Eastern only.

tudes they do not move. They have no place in the West, have never been acclimatised in European countries. The same may be said of Mohammedanism, with certain modifications. It is of Arab origin ; and when the Moors conquered Spain, they built mosques in Cordova, and other cities, and they read the Koran there in schools and colleges ; but their religion was one of race ; hence, on their expulsion, it could no longer live in the region to which it had been transplanted. The Moslem faith expired in Spain, when left by the Moslem race. In striking contrast with that history, are the facts which have been adduced on these pages. Christianity, in its substantial beliefs at the present period, girdles the globe as it never did before. It is adapted to the Oriental mind, and equally so to the Anglo-Saxon. The elementary creed which we have attempted to indicate, is adopted by people in every part of the earth ; and, we may add, if some phases of Buddhist philosophy are finding favour with a few intellectual circles in Europe, they scarcely touch the average minds of our countrymen, and certainly do not penetrate the humbler classes of society ; whereas the doctrines of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and of salvation by grace through faith, and of holiness as essential to religion, are appreciated and prized by the humblest Christian minds ; thus a wide intellectual, as well as spiritual.

Mohammedanism
left Spain
when the
Moslem race
left Spain.

Christianity
girdles the
globe.

Christian
doctrines are
appreciated
and prized
by the
humblest
Christian
minds.

education is carried on wherever the Church of Christ has found a home.

VIII.

Proof of the
Divine
origin and
preservation
of Chris-
tianity.

The
peculiarities
of funda-
mental
Christian
principles.

WE reserve for the conclusion of this Tract that upon which the whole of our review is intended to bear—namely, the proof it afforded of the Divine origin and preservation of Christianity. No religion resembles it in this respect, that it extends into every portion of the globe, and prevails most in those countries which take the lead in modern enlightenment and freedom of thought, differing in this respect altogether from Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islamism; and yet, with diversities of race and locality, Christians unite in holding fast the fundamental principles we have imperfectly described. This in itself is a surprising fact. And when we come closely to examine these principles, we find they are as peculiar as they are important. They are not shared by any people outside Christendom—that is, outside the sphere of Gospel influence. The spirituality and Fatherhood of God; the true moral condition of mankind; the gracious possibilities held out to them through the redemption wrought by Christ Jesus; His ineffably glorious nature and character; the personality and puri-

fying work of the Holy Spirit; salvation, not by human means, but by Divine faith and promises of a blessed future in this world and the next—these characteristics are its own exclusively, presenting altogether an aspect entirely unique. Its literature—devout and experimental, as well as doctrinal and historical—also finds no parallel in any other connection; and the whole appeals to the mind, heart, and conscience, on intellectual and spiritual grounds, apart from anything like coercion. At the same time, this literature relates to facts which, though fully substantiated, are confessedly mysterious, and to ideas which, though manifestly practical in their influence, are refined and sublime, and in some respects incomprehensible in their nature. Hence, looking at the distinctions of race, and the idiosyncracy of individuals, we see that diversities of apprehensions and inferences respecting the Gospel of Christ were sure to arise. The wonder is that deeper and wider differences, going down to the very foundation, splitting and overthrowing every part of it, did not arise at an early period. Assuredly that would have been the case, had not a Divine hand laid the corner-stones, and a Divine Spirit preserved the edifice. Finally, it should not be forgotten that there is an aversion in human hearts to the humbling doctrines of Christianity which many who have embraced them, to their

The un-paralleled character of Christian literature.

The facts and ideas to which Christian literature relates.

The marvel that fundamental differences did not very early arise.

The natural aversion of the human heart to the doctrines of Christianity.

The New Testament anticipated the difficulties to be overcome.

An overlooked branch of Christian evidence.

after joy, found it at first hard to overcome. This the New Testament anticipated; and what has actually taken place fulfils the prescient anticipation. Therefore what we have said serves to supply a branch of Christian evidence often overlooked, but which when examined is found to be most satisfactory to unprejudiced minds.



THE FAMILY: ITS SCRIPTURAL IDEAL AND ITS MODERN ASSAILANTS

BY

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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

THE natural foundation of the family is laid in the length of time that elapses before the human being arrives at maturity. The purpose of this arrangement is shown to be to provide a longer connection between parents and their offspring, and between the children themselves. The constituent elements of the family and the conditions of their harmonious action are pointed out. The purpose of the family in relation to husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, friends and acquaintances, and also servants is indicated. The objections to the Divine ideal of the family are then dealt with. The assaults against the Christian law of marriage by Strauss and other objectors are met.

The disastrous results of making marriage capable of dissolution at the will of the parties, and the true remedy for admitted evils are shown. Family life is shown to be the best arrangement for bringing up children. The experience of public bodies and of Christian philanthropists is shown to bear strongly in the direction of the family constitution. The due influence of parents in forming the religious character of their children is insisted upon, and likewise that of brothers and sisters.

And the Christian family, moulded by the rules and actuated by the spirit of the Gospel, is declared to be the best nursery both for the Church and for the State. The mischievous effects on family life of the Confessional in the Romish Church are exposed in an appendix.

THE FAMILY: ITS SCRIPTURAL IDEAL AND ITS MODERN ASSAILANTS.



PART THE FIRST—THE DIVINE PLAN.

I. THE FOUNDATION OF THE FAMILY IN NATURE.



It is a striking fact that of all animals, and especially of all domestic animals, man is by far the longest in reaching maturity, or even independence.

The human animal takes long to reach maturity.

The dog, the horse, the ox can look after themselves in a few months, and they reach their full strength and stature in three or four years, at most. Ten or twelve is the earliest age at which the human creature can sustain itself under conditions that are not hurtful or even fatal to life. Infant matchmakers, infant colliers, infant needle-makers, when they were discovered, shocked every feeling of humanity ; and the law had to be changed to shield some of them from such treatment. Ordinarily, the human frame does not reach its maturity till the age of sixteen or eighteen. If there be cases among the lower animals of equal

The earliest age at which the human creature can sustain itself.

lateness of reaching maturity, there are certainly no cases in which the animal remains so long as man in a state of helplessness. It is a fact beyond question that the highest of the creatures is utterly helpless long after other creatures are able to provide for their wants.

The physical cause for this unknown.

It is not easy to assign a natural cause for this peculiarity. Physiologists can point to nothing as yet ascertained in the component elements of the human frame that should make it so much later in reaching maturity. Analogy presents us with no parallel. If it be said that creatures of higher organization reach maturity more slowly than creatures of inferior organization, the remark is true; but is the physical organization of man so much higher than that of the horse that the one should take five or six times as long as the other to attain its prime? The remarkable fact is not merely that man is longer than any other animal of reaching maturity, but that he is so much longer. The fact stands out so remarkably in the economy of nature as to command attention and challenge inquiry. And it is all the more remarkable because no physical cause has been discovered fitted to explain it. All that we can say is that, by some means not yet apparent, the development in man of bone and muscle and nerve is so modified, that it does not go on at what from analogy might be called its

The fact so remarkable as to command attention.

natural rate of speed, but is subjected to a slower movement. This however is no real explanation of the fact that man is kept back from even starting in the race of life till many animals, born at the same time with himself, have either become old or have finished their course.

If we are ignorant of the physical cause of this arrangement, we have no difficulty in seeing a moral cause for it. It is the foundation in nature of the family constitution. The law of nature provides that the young of the human species remain with their parents much longer than the young of other animals. It is easy to see the end to which this arrangement is subservient. Its natural effects are mainly two. In the first place, opportunity is given for a much longer and closer connection between parents and their offspring. And in the second place, opportunity is given for a much longer and closer connection between the children themselves. Among the inferior animals, the bond of parent and child lasts but a little time, and is soon obliterated; while the bond between brothers and sisters hardly exists at all. The family constitution is reserved for the human race, and its foundation is laid on an unchangeable basis—the long helplessness of man. It is not an ordinary adaptation that is seen here, but an adaptation in one sphere to a sphere quite different; an adaptation of the

The
moral cause
obvious.

Its
natural
effects
mainly two.

physical to the moral, of the material to the spiritual, of the outer world of nature to the inner life of man.

“A longer care man’s helpless kind demands,
That longer care contracts more lasting bands.
Reflection, reason still the ties improve,
At once extend the interest and the love.

* * * * *

And still new needs, new helps, new habits rise
That graft benevolence on charities.”

Pope’s Essay on Man.

II. THE IDEAL OF THE FAMILY.

The family a combination of elements.

THE family is one of nature’s combinations, being composed of several constituent parts; and it shows the same properties as are usually found in the other combinations of nature. In such combinations we find two things: first, a natural affinity or attraction of the parts to each other; and second, harmony and repose when the combination is effected, as if some invisible cement had been made use of to bind the whole into one.

Natural combinations harmonious.

Harsh, frictional combinations are foreign to nature. The oxygen and hydrogen that combine to form water have a natural affinity to each other, and the product is so beautifully harmonious that no one could have fancied beforehand that water was not a simple substance. The most striking instance of harmonious combination in nature is that of light, where the seven colours

of the rainbow give birth to a product in which the faintest trace of discord can never be found.

Nature, in arranging her forces, makes a similar provision in that combination which we call the family. The intention of nature, or rather of the Creator, seems obvious here, although that intention is often frustrated by the perversity of man. In the first place, a natural affinity draws the man and the woman together. There is not only the natural affinity of the sexes, but there is the individual attraction between one man and one woman, the desire to be closely related to each other, which is the true and natural foundation of marriage. It would be a very low view of the marriage relation that would make it flow from instinct alone. Man is surely much more than an animal. Has he not a spiritual nature that allies him to the higher orders of being, as really as his animal nature allies him to the lower? And when one human being is drawn to another with a view to the closest relation it is possible to form, surely this is not merely an attraction of the animal; the higher nature has a share in it too. We speak, at present, of what seems to be the purpose of the institution. We say that the law of affinity that governs all nature's combinations leads us to expect that the foundation of marriage should lie in an affinity or attraction, not of one part of man's nature merely,

The combination in marriage.

Marriage the product of affinities.

and not of the lower part of it merely, but of the whole. And when we turn to the Bible we find this view amply confirmed, for it is said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh."¹ There must be some attraction of the higher nature to draw a man from his father and mother, to whom his best affections would naturally induce him to cling. In other words, true marriage has its foundation in the attractive power of love.

True
marriage
founded
in
love.

Love the
cement of
the family.

It fuses
different
tempera-
ments and
tastes.

And as love is its foundation, so also it is the cement designed to bind the two beings into unity, and give rise to that harmony which we have seen to characterize all nature's combinations. Differences of temperament, varieties of taste, diversities of will, diverse forms of natural weakness and natural temptation tend naturally to friction and discord. What provision is there in nature to counteract this tendency and secure harmony? Love is the moral cement of nature. By its magic power, different temperaments become the complements of each other, opposing tastes find a method of reconciliation, and even contradictory wills, by learning to take and give, to bear and forbear, become like one. Such, we say, is the method by which the combination of elements in a family may come to be marked by that repose and harmony which is found in the ordinary combinations of nature.

¹ Matthew xix. 5.

It is quite possible to make a great truth appear ridiculous, either by distorting it, or by placing it, like a jewel in a swine's snout, in a very incongruous position. The love of man and woman may easily be ridiculed; in point of fact, it is more than anything else in this world a matter of joke and banter; and as delineated in ten thousand of the love stories that fall on us like leaves in Valambrosa, it hardly deserves any other treatment. Yet in the hands of a Shakespeare or a Milton the love of man and woman is something that inspires the highest respect and awe; it stands out a pure and noble feeling, and is associated with all that is best and brightest in human life and aspiration. So that, after all, there is a certain basis of truth even in our wildest love stories when they reach their climax in the union of lovers who "live happily ever after!" And have we not a phrase about "marriages made in heaven?" What does it mean, but that there is such a degree of natural adaptation and loving affinity between the parties as to show that their union fulfils the design of heaven? In such cases, the conditions of nature's combinations—affinity and harmony—are so apparent, as to leave no doubt that the combination was intended. A very grave old book—the "First Book of Discipline" of the Reformed Church of Scotland—thus indicates the conditions

The
love of
man and
woman
a sacred
thing.

Love of
man and
woman in
Shakespeare
and Milton.

How
marriages
are made in
heaven.

on which marriage is to be regarded as in accordance with the will of God:—"the work of God we call when two hearts are so joined, that both require and are content to live together in that holy bond of matrimony."

Love as
the basis of
marriage
not
Utopian.

Perhaps it will be asked, Are you serious in affirming that marriage should always be founded on mutual love? Is not such an idea utterly Utopian? It may be; but Utopianism is not always the opposite of truth or of duty. If we were to lay it down as a proper rule of life that men should always speak the truth, it would seem utterly impracticable and Utopian; and yet it is a right and proper rule. When we speak of love we do not mean necessarily the state of ecstatic fervour which is commonly delineated in novels and which is sometimes found in actual life. That real affinity of hearts to each other which is the true foundation of marriage, may be, and often is, much more calm and undemonstrative. What we are concerned to maintain is, that this affinity of hearts should prevail above everything else; no mere animal desire, no regard for money, or title, or family connection, or social position, must override it. Does not all experience show that connections formed from regard to such considerations are too often miserable failures?

The
character
of real
affinity of
hearts and
minds.

All out of joint as the world now is through the prevalence of sin; disturbed as is the natural

order of things, and worse confounded the confusion through hereditary corruption, bad example, and the impatient impulses of lust-driven souls, it unfortunately happens that not one but many a divine plan has come to be regarded as a pious idea or devout imagination. And yet these divine ideals must be recalled and set up for men's instruction and consideration. If the world is ever to come right, it can only be by working towards them. If the family is ever to be what God designed it, it must be constructed after the divine model; and if it is constructed after the divine model, marriage must have its foundation in the affinity of hearts.

There is another important element that enters into the idea of a complete family, and in connection with which, too, provision is made in nature for harmonious combination with the other elements—namely, *children*. It is not difficult to see, either in theory or in practice, that children may very readily become a most discordant element. Every one knows how soon both the will and the passions are developed in them, and how utterly beyond the control, whether of reason, of conscience, or of common sense, these are at first. To bring about the needful and desirable harmony, the parents are furnished with two things, strength and affection. They have strength of body if not also of mind to enforce what they deem right; but

Many
Divine
ideals
called
Utopian.

Children a
constituent
of the
family.

Provision
in nature
for making
children
harmonious.

the employment of sheer strength would only stir up the spirit of rebellion, and while producing a temporary submission, make the discord deeper in the end. Hence love, parental love, is supplied, to make the application of strength more smooth and more effective. The two must work together, otherwise evil ensues. Strength without affection makes the parents hated ; affection without strength gives the children an easy victory over them. Commonly it is to the mother that the larger share of parental love is given, because from hour to hour and from day to day it is she that is most exposed to the children's wayward humours. To the father, again, is given by nature the larger share of strength, because he is responsible for the government of the family, and is usually called to act in those critical moments that determine whether child or parent is to be the true master of the house.

How
the plan
is often
frustrated.

Thus we see how, in the case of families, the great law of nature is exemplified which aims at making all combinations harmonious and efficient. If in the case of any family the combination is discordant, it is because the working out of the plan is abused in the hands of frail human beings. For it is a painful fact in this world's history that nothing so often frustrates the plans of providence as the intervention of man. When divine arrangements fall to be carried into effect by the

blind forces of nature, they are carried out with precision and certainty; but when they are dependent on the intervention of man, bungling and defeat are too often the result. Alas, that the lord of creation, the nearest to the Creator in intellectual and moral quality, should so often become a hindrance and even a nuisance, in connection with His plans! Alas that it should so often happen that the more intelligent and independent God's instruments are, the more liable are they to derange and frustrate all!

Human
intervention
often mars
Divine ar-
rangements.

III. THE PURPOSE OF THE FAMILY.

1. *As regards the fellowship of husband and wife.*

It is to be remarked that the reason which is given in the second chapter of Genesis why God made woman is, that He might furnish the man with a suitable companion; it is not till afterwards that she is named Eve, in token of her motherhood, "because she was the mother of all living."¹ Scripture views the relation of the married man and woman, therefore, as having an important end to serve in the divine purpose, even apart from the continuation of the race. They were to be much to one another. The closeness of their union was denoted by the symbol of the rib—they were to become one flesh; and the

Union
of husband
and wife
designed
for mutual
happiness.

¹ Gen. ii. 18; iii. 20.

obligation thus arising for the man to love and cherish his wife was very strong, for "no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it." The truth that is brought out in this way in Scripture is obviously in accord with the light of reason too. Man and woman come into this remarkable relation of unity in order to promote each other's welfare.

The design not always but often fulfilled.

True, there is often discord instead of unity. But unity is certainly attained in quite a sufficient number of cases to vindicate the wisdom of the arrangement. Nor is it only between persons of similar temperament and gifts that this unity is found. Diversity of gifts and temperament is no bar to its existence where mutual complacency exists in sufficient strength. For the woman was not intended to be the duplicate of the man, but his complement. Her most characteristic gifts are not identical with his. If strength, firmness, courage, perseverance, be more special endowments of the man, tenderness, compassion, gentleness, and endurance are more those of the woman ; and perhaps the unity is most striking when the gifts are most diverse.

Marriage miserable when unity is not realised.

One thing is very certain : if this unity be not realized, the relation of husband and wife, instead of being beneficial, must be irksome and even disastrous to both. To be forced to live, eat, sleep, and worship together, while their hearts are at open discord, is simply awful. On the

other hand, where there is substantial unity, the necessary interlacing of all the events of their life makes the unity the greater, and invests the relation with a more tender interest and a profounder sanctity. To bear the same name ; to spend their days and nights in the same house and chamber ; to share the same worldly goods ; to be parents of the same children ; to be partners of one another's joys and sorrows, cares and anxieties, perplexities and deliverances ; to look to one another for counsel and cheer ; to mingle their prayers and thanksgivings as none else can ; to look back along the line of their lives, and think of all they have shared ; to look forward, and think of the inevitable parting that is coming, and then of the reunion which faith expects ; who shall deny that such experiences are fitted not only to deepen the unity which lies at the foundation of the relation, but to elevate the tone of life, purify the character, and sweeten the current of existence, as no other earthly influences can ?

Where the two are one flesh, there must be no contact with other flesh. And here, too, nature provides an abundant reward for those who are faithful to her order. Nothing keeps the fountain of conjugal love so pure and fresh as absolute faithfulness to the marriage bond. The stream of enjoyment flows on calm and pure, and seems to lose nothing with the lapse of years. The heart

It is most
advanta-
geous when
unity is
realised.

The great
blessing of
fidelity.

continues young and fresh in spite of grey hairs and wrinkled faces. On the other hand, the least invasion of license falls like a blight on wedded life, withers natural enjoyment, and ends in aversion if not disgust.

Unity and
purity of
family life
exemplified
in
Paganism.

Even in pagan nations, there have been beautiful instances of a happy unity and the highest esteem between man and wife. Joseph Cook, in his Boston lectures, finds much in this connection to vindicate marriage on natural grounds. He instances the case of the wife of Phocion, the great reformer, who, when her husband was refused burial in Attic soil, went by night to burn the body, brought back his bones to Athens, buried them beneath her hearth, and blessed the place that thus afforded protection to the remains of a good and great man, until the Athenians, returning to their right minds, should restore them to the sepulchre of his fathers. More striking is the story told by Cyrus of Panthea, the wife of Abradatus. She loved her husband with a supreme affection. When taken captive by Cyrus, he asked her where her home was. "On the bosom of my husband," was in substance her reply; and when offered a dazzling position at the Court of Cyrus, she besought them to send her swiftly home. "If ever there was a woman that regarded her husband more than her own soul, she was that woman." Encouraging him to fight for Cyrus to show his

The
wife of
Phocion and
the wife of
Abradatus.

gratitude, she sent him with her blessing to the battle in which he fell. Again she had offers of this world's glory; again her purpose was declared to be with her husband.

"I cannot justify Panthea in everything," says Mr. Cook. "She had been brought up to the stern opinions which justified suicide. She told her maid to cover her in the same mantle with her husband. Then she smote herself; put her head upon his breast, and fell asleep. Great nature is in that! You wish me to teach what science proclaims respecting family life. I must ask you to go back to the deepest springs of human experience. These women, Phocion's wife and the wife of Abra-datus are sisters to us all, helpers to every age. They are crystalline water bursting up from the innermost rifts of human nature and society, and one in its purity with that rain which falls on all the hills, and is the real source, after all, of every one of these crystalline springs."¹

Mr. Joseph
Cook on a
Pagan wife

Even under Paganism there were thus influences strong enough to realize in at least some instances the true unity of husband and wife, and show to the world what kind of relation it was designed to be. Christianity has brought new influences into the field. A new pattern has been furnished of conjugal unity, and a new force for developing conjugal love.

Christianity
furnishes a
new pattern
and a new
dynamic.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth

¹ Monday Lectures : "Infidel Attack on the Family."

it, even as the Lord the Church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."¹

Respecting this high platform on which conjugal love has been placed by Christianity, we shall have more to say when we come to speak of current objections to the sacredness and permanence of the conjugal union.

Instinctive
love of the
mother for
her
offspring

2. *The relation of parents and children.* At first, this relation does not seem to differ much from that which is found in the lower animals; but the difference becomes very apparent when the distinctive features of the human being begin to appear. That the *instinctive* love of offspring should be much stronger in the mother than the father is not to be wondered at; for in the history of the infant before and after birth, there is much more to impress on the mother her relation to the child, as bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh. Instinctively she clings to her child. She tends it, suckles it, clothes it, toils for it, and is even prepared to die for it. She welcomes with unspeakable delight the first smile of affection on its face, and coaxes the repetition of it with every art and wile of affection. A woman destitute of parental love is no woman; even the irrational creation furnishes no parallel to her heartlessness.

The father's
love for his
offspring.

In the man, the parental affection has a somewhat different foundation. He has been the means of giving existence to the child. It is his, shared

¹ Ephesians v. 25-30.

with the wife of his bosom. Its very existence appeals to his conscience, its helplessness to his compassion. The development of lively affection is somewhat later, but in a healthy nature it is rapid and strong. The winning ways of little children, their playfulness, their guilelessness and affectionateness soon lay a deep hold on a true father's heart. Men are often unconscious of the strength of the affection until the sickness and death of the child reveals it. The closeness with which it has wound itself round the father's heart, is discovered only by the severity of the wrench which severs them.

Now let us observe that the provision of nature for the bringing up of children is to place them under the charge of their two parents, both possessed of affection towards them, though in somewhat different proportions, and this provision for their upbringing is most essential. It will be admitted that children differ from the lower animals in the want of power, even after they cease to be infants, to adapt themselves to the conditions of life. A lamb, when it is weaned, is quite as able to get along in the world as its father or its mother. The fledgling, once it has left the nest, needs little or nothing more from its parents. On the other hand, the untrained child becomes an Ishmaelite, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him. An essential

Nature's
provision
for bringing
up children.

Moral
training
essential.

Natural
tendency
to be
corrected.

desideratum for a child is moral training. It may be assumed that if this be neglected, the wilder impulses of his nature will prevail, forces that bring ruin and misery to himself and render him a pest to society. The temper will become ungovernable. Love of play will become too strong for the spirit of industry. Truth will be disregarded, and lies spoken when an object is to be gained thereby. Whatever he desires to have he will seize if he can, no matter what injustice or dishonesty may be committed. All this has to be corrected at the very earliest period of life. The plan of nature commits the chief share of this training to the parents. It is for this end that that twofold force, strength and affection, has been entrusted to them. They must try to get the child's moral nature rectified. Their function is a double one, to teach and to train. They must teach the child what is right and what is wrong, what is wise and what is foolish, and they must urge him to carry their lessons into effect. They must try to fashion his daily habits in accordance with sound principles. They must watch his faults, and constrain him to correct them. They must study his disposition, so as to apply their influence in a suitable way. They must stimulate him to high attainments, trying to get him in love with the divine rules of life, and thus to follow them not with painful reluctance,

High aims
and habits
to be
fostered.

but with a willing mind. They are to endeavour to send out into the world young men and women qualified to do their share of the world's work in an efficient manner, and to be helpers, not hindrances, to the order and prosperity of society. In addition to this, a still higher function is committed under Christianity to the father and mother; they are to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to try to qualify them alike for the business of this life, and of the life which is to come.

Is this too hard and too heavy a task for parents? So it is affirmed by those who disparage the family institute, and who would gather children into barracks or other large establishments, where they would be brought up by the wisest and most experienced of the race, under the best conditions of efficient training. To commit such work to parents of average character, is objected to on two grounds; first, because where it is attempted, the work will be done ill, in consequence of the folly and ignorance of the parents; and second, because in a vast multitude of cases, it will not be attempted at all.

The remark must be repeated, that the best provisions of Providence may be wholly neutralized by the folly and perversity of men. But the question now before us regards the wisdom and the general feasibleness of the plan which

The task
deemed by
some to
be too
difficult.

It is not im-
practicable.

commits the upbringing of children to their parents in connection with the family system, not to public institutions, even though these might be conducted by the wisest members of the community.

Parents in
the humblest
rank often
successful.

That the qualifications needed for the right upbringing of children are within the reach of the ordinary run of parents, is sufficiently clear from the fact, that many a parent, in the humblest ranks of life, has discharged the duty with admirable success. In what a multitude of cases have men risen to distinction, and conferred honour on their country, who have been reared in great poverty, but by parents who have set them a noble example, and secured their deepest respect and gratitude. Professional men, ministers, missionaries, soldiers, sailors, travellers, and even statesmen—how often has the first chapter of their lives told of a home where the conditions of life were as hard as the virtues of the parents were high. When Dr. Livingstone composed a simple epitaph to be placed on the tombstone of his father and mother, the one thing which he desired to commemorate was the gratitude of their children to God for poor and pious parents. He refused to change the expression into “poor but pious,” because he believed in the beneficial influences of poverty, in the nobility of character which it had fostered in them, and in the good he had got from it himself. Had he been

Living-
stone's
epitaph on
his father's
and mother's
tombstone.

brought up in luxury and splendour he would not have learned the habits that enabled him to open Africa at a cost of painful endurance and unflinching perseverance seldom equalled in the annals of mankind. It is not great intellect nor ample means that enables a parent to give a good upbringing to his children, but conscientious devotion to duty, the spirit of love, and a good example. These are qualities within the reach of every class.

Much stress is to be laid on the last point—the good example. In the many instances of failure in the bringing up of families, a good example has seldom been present. And there is no sphere where example has such power as in the family. The members of a family are bound together as one community, having a common life, and ways and habits corresponding.

Power of
example in
families.

Common
life in the
family.

"They are all locked together in one cause, in common cares, hopes, offices, and duties ; for their honour and dishonour, their sustenance, their ambition, all their objects are common. So they are trained of necessity to a kind of general working or co-operation, and like stones rolled together in some brook or eddy, they wear each other into common shapes. If the family subsist by plunder, then the infant is swaddled as a thief, the child wears a thief's garments, and feeds the growth of his body on stolen meat ; and in due time he will have the trade upon him without ever knowing that he has taken it up, or when he took it up. . . . If the family subsist in idleness and beggary, then the children will be trained to lie skilfully and maintain their false pretences with a plausible effrontery—all this not as a sin, but as a trade. . . . If the house is a den of filth and disorder, the children must be at home in it. Fretfulness and ill-temper in the parents are provocations, and therefore more

efficacious than commandments to the same. . . . If the parents never read the Bible they will never teach it. If they laugh at religion they will put a face on it which will make the children justify the contempt they express.”¹

All this expresses the dark and ugly side of the picture. But surely it has a bright side likewise. To be brought up under the influence of all the virtues, and amid corresponding habits of life, more especially when the example is commended by a loving spirit and a calm temper, is surely in most cases the preparation for at least a steady and honourable life. If the depravity of our nature prevents a good example from being followed as readily and as thoroughly as a bad, it does not deprive it of all power, for besides exerting its own direct influence, it appeals with great force to the conscience of the child. Even in the case of those wayward beings, whose irregular impulses overbear for the time all higher influences, the remembrance of the home and its comely order will often come back with great force in solemn moments of life and give birth to the prodigal’s resolution, “I will arise and go unto my father.” Are not the most powerful associations of life connected with home and its memories? Has not the remembrance of a mother’s love proved a great power for good in instances without number, and especially at critical moments of life? It is not so much what parents say as what they are that tells on their children.

Efficacy of example even in the worst cases.

Home memories the most powerful associations of life.

¹ Bushnell’s *Christian Nurture*.

It is the real and not the showy that lives in their memory and moves their heart, and plants deep in their nature the conviction, "Yes, they were right; and we can be right only if we live like them."

In estimating the moral value of the family as a whole, we must not lose sight of the influence which the children often have on the parents. "What I learned from my children" might often be the subject of as interesting a narrative as "What I learned from my parents." What father has not found occasion to search deeper into truth from the strange questions which children so often put respecting things which older minds are apt to take for granted? Who has not felt likewise the limitation of the human understanding, and the impossibility of explaining many things on which the curiosity of children is not unnaturally raised? All the arguments of Butler do not prove more conclusively that "the government of God is a scheme imperfectly comprehended," than do the questions of a child. Indeed the whole subject of our relation to God has much light thrown on it from the relation of our children to ourselves. If we have often to say to them, "You cannot understand this yet, but you will know about it when you are older,"—is it unreasonable that God should often have to say the same to us? If we expect obedience and trust from them, may not God

Moral
influence of
children on
parents.

Light
on our
relation to
God from
the relation
of children
to parents.

A mother convicted of sin through a prodigal son.

reasonably expect obedience and trust from us? The present writer, in his early ministry, had once occasion to hear the spiritual history of an afflicted woman, who was lying in bed, awaiting the last messenger. "For many years," she said, "I did not see that I was a sinner, I did not think that I had seriously broken any of the commandments of God. But I had the misfortune to have an only son who ran away from me, and never wrote to me, or seemed to care to hear of me or from me. Then it flashed upon me that I had been just as unmindful of my heavenly Father, as my son had been of me. Though I had not been guilty of open sins, I had utterly neglected my duty to my heavenly Father. The words came into my mind, 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider.' I got a new light on the whole of my life; I saw myself to be a great sinner; and I got no rest until I came to the cross, and was there sprinkled with the blood that cleanseth from all sin."

Humanising influence of children.

The presence of children in a house softens the heart, makes it more human and sympathetic. It brings men down from the stiff and serious attitude of business. It evokes the gentler and the more playful elements of our nature. It keeps the heart young and its affections fresh. It promotes geniality, kindliness, and compassion. Sometimes

it arrests the decay of affection on the part of the parents to each other, and recruits the spring of conjugal love. From a child's death-bed or a child's grave there has often come a very holy influence.

“ For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.”

The Princess.

But more powerful than anything yet noticed, is the effect on a right-minded man of the thought of his children in reference to his own temptations and dangers. There are evil pleasures whose attraction might prove too strong for some men, if the thought of their children did not come to check them. What would they think if these children were to do the same? How would they be disgraced before their own families if they were to yield to such snares? Emphatically this consideration tells on Christian parents. To have charge of the souls of others is often the most effectual means of inducing us to take earnest care of our own. Suppose I fall into carelessness and self-indulgence, what must be the effect of this in the eyes of my children? Must it not be to make them careless and self-indulgent too? Will it not undo the effect of all that I teach them? It must not be! God give me grace to walk so carefully in all His ways, that no encouragement shall ever

They supply
a power of
resisting
temptation.

The effect
of their
conduct
on their
children
fitted to
make
parents
circumspect.

be given by me to ways of carelessness and wickedness for them !

Having entered so fully into these elements of the combination which constitutes the family, we must now glance more briefly at some of the other constituents.

Influence
of
brothers
and sisters.

3. We note then, next, the relation of *brothers and sisters*. In a well regulated family this is a very important factor. The ideal of the Christian home suggests the thought of Milton's *Comus*, where pure-minded brothers, admiring a dear sister's purity, are concerned lest, alone in the world, she should fall in the way of any of those bloated monsters that would drag even an angel into their filthy sty. Commend us to those homes wheré brothers and sisters, sharing many a game, and confiding to each other many a secret in their lives, never utter a jest, or word, or allusion, with the slightest taint of indelicacy, and love and honour each other with all the higher affection that none of them has ever been near any of the haunts of pollution. It is easy to ridicule "innocence," to scoff at those who "flee youthful lusts"; yet who will say that the youth who is steeped in fashionable sensuality is worthy to be the brother and companion of pure-minded maidens, or that his breath will not contaminate the atmosphere of their home?

Intercourse
of
brothers
and sisters.

What easy victories Belial gains over many ! How easily he persuades them that vice is manly, that impurity is grand, that the pig's sty is a delightful place to lie down in ! How easily he induces them to lay snares for female chastity, and put the devil's mark on woman's soul ! "O my soul, come not thou into their secret ; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united" !

The
victories of
Belial.

If, in spite of the holy influence of pure-minded sisters, young men should fall into sensual vice, the pangs of remorse and self-condemnation will be all the sharper, so long as conscience retains aught of its authority, or the heart aught of its appreciation of goodness. In most cases, surely, the influence will be strong in opposition to the power of temptation. Is not a measure of that respect which a brother has for the honour of his sisters due to every woman with whom he comes in contact ? Must not every woman be somebody's sister, or at least somebody's daughter ? And if the rule to do to others as you would be done by is a righteous rule, how can he be justified in treating any woman in a manner which, if practised towards his sister, would excite his unbounded indignation ?

Influence
of sisters on
the side of
purity.

But apart from this painful subject, what a blessed provision we have for the spread of mutual benefit in the contrasted qualities of brothers and sisters attached to each other, and deeply interested

The benefit
from con-
trasted
qualities in
brothers and
sisters.

Social and
Christian
influence of
brotherly
and sisterly
sympathy.

in each other's welfare ! The sisters interested in the brothers' work and sports, though they do not share them, proud of their successes, always sympathetic in their troubles, and where the Christian spirit reigns, pleading morning and night for their highest good. And the brothers delighting in the affection of their sisters, eager to tell them whatever will interest them, happy in their happiness, and ready to risk all they have when it is necessary for their protection. The glow may pass from their feelings as they get settled in life, with their several duties and interests; but deep in their hearts the root-affection will ever abide, ready to show itself in many a friendly act in times of need, and especially in those dark hours when the heart is bruised with sorrow, and the home darkened by the angel of death.

A great charm in the relation of brothers and sisters comes from the difference in their ages. The power to help on the part of the older is designed to develop the sense of responsibility, and when duly exercised, gives them some share in the parental government, and facilitates the work of the parents themselves. Moreover, there is a development of that tender spirit which intercourse with the weak stirs in the hearts of the strong. And the younger children, when thus generously and kindly treated by the older, learn to regard them with affectionate respect, recognise their help

Mutual
Helpfulness
of brothers
and sisters.

both in work and in play, and feel that the whole life of the family is enriched and heightened under their influence. If the relation of the older children to the younger is often a cause of oppression on the one side and rage on the other, it is only because the institution is perverted from its true intention; because there has been a new instance of what from the beginning has neutralized so many blessings—the trail of the old serpent in Eden.

4. In many families, besides brothers and sisters, there are also *servants*. Where there are such, the moral purpose of the arrangement is not difficult to see. There is a duty to be performed to them, as well as a duty required of them. Respectful consideration and kindly sympathy enter as truly into the duty of employers to their servants as the payment of the stipulated wages. On the other hand, attachment to the family and fidelity to their duty are not less clearly required of the servants. Evidently the purpose of Providence in thus placing servants as members of our wealthier households is to bring together different orders of society, and to establish friendly links between them. If the complaint so often heard be well-founded, that many servants in these days show no manner of interest either in their work or in the family, may the reason not be that many employers in these days show no manner of con-

Influence of
servants in
families.

Moral ends
in connec-
tion with
servants.

These
ends often
perverted.

sideration for their servants or friendly sympathy towards them? And is there not sometimes a darker side in the relation of masters, or of their families, to servants? Can anything be more atrocious, more subversive of God's design, or more fitted to bring down His displeasure, than when advantage is taken of the dependent and defenceless condition of young servants to subvert their principles, and it may be betray them and ruin them? We know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that do such things.

The
moral ends
sometimes
beautifully
realized.

On the other hand, have not some of the most beautiful things in modern life sprung from the relation of faithful servants and considerate employers? The early upbringing of the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury has of late been much in the public eye. His was a sad case of failure on the part of those who had the chief responsibility—his father and mother. Going on the old-fashioned idea that the only way to secure the obedience of children was to excite their fear, they kept them at arm's length, and suppressed every token of affection. It happened that the first public school to which the Earl was sent was one conducted on the same principle, a school without love, where every odious passion reigned, compared by Lord Shaftesbury to Dotheboys Hall of Dickens. Nothing can be more pathetic than his own statement, that when

Lord
Shaftes-
bury's early
training.

the vacations were approaching, he was miserable because he had to go home, and when they were ending he was miserable because he had to return to school. The young lord had but one friend in the world—a servant, Maria Millis, his nurse. She died before he was eight years old, yet during her short opportunity she did two things that had a most important bearing on his lordship's life. She let him feel what it was to be loved; and she taught him something of the love of God. The bitterness of his early life was mitigated by that one blink of sunshine—an old servant's love. And high up in the heavens he was taught to believe in a higher love—"love divine all love excelling," and to seek the God of love as the guide of his life. It is strange that the greatest philanthropist of modern times should have had such a dreary home. But as in nature the want of rain is sometimes compensated by copious dew that distils on the tender herb and makes it bright and fragrant, so in Providence the absence of parental love is sometimes made up for even by the affection of a servant. If we look only to human instrumentality we may say that, but for the influence of Maria Millis, Lord Shaftesbury would never have entered on his career of philanthropy; while it may be added, with a similar qualification, in reference to his maturer years, that but for the constant and most loving influence of his wife, he would have

His one friend.

How Lord Shaftesbury's life was shaped

been unable to maintain the serenity and the determination which enabled him to triumph in the end. The watch bequeathed to him by Maria Millis he used to the end of his life, speaking of it as the gift of the best friend he ever had. But for her how differently might his hours have been spent, and what an untold mass of human suffering might have remained unrelieved to this very day !

Influence
of family
friends.

5. The *friends* and *acquaintances* of a family extend the horizon of interest, affection, and sympathy. They bind society by additional ties. They constitute, too, a public opinion for the family, and especially for the younger members, the influence of which, while in many cases tending to evil, has probably on the whole a greater tendency to good. For the disgrace of evil behaviour is reflected in some degree on this outer circle, as well as on the inner sanctuary of home. On the other hand, good conduct excites the approval of family friends, and success gives them pleasure. Life friendships are often formed; and, in many an instance, life connections closer than friendship, making the bonds still firmer and more enduring.

The
theory of
the family
unassailable

In these pages, we have had for our main object to delineate the original purpose of the family. We have shown the nature and the capabilities of the institution set up by the Creator to knit men and

women in happy bonds, to provide for the birth of children, and to provide also for their upbringing. Little fault, we are sure, can be found with the theory. It is only on the practical side that the institution is assailable. The great objection to it is substantially, that the hands to which the management is committed are not able to work it wisely. It is maintained by its opponents that it not only fails in exceptional cases, but that it is a failure throughout. It creates more disorder than virtue, and more misery than happiness. It has been tried in the balances of life and found wanting. It is high time that it were superseded. Society, now so shaken and out of joint, must be built up on a different basis. To the discussion of some of these objections we now proceed.

Objections
from the
practical
side.

PART THE SECOND—OBJECTIONS.

I. THE MARRIAGE TIE.

Objections
to Scriptural
grounds of
divorce.

IT is a remarkable fact, that socialism in its extreme forms, as well as atheism and rationalism, have all, in these days, directed their assault against the Christian law of marriage, and especially against that provision which declares that the marriage tie shall be dissoluble only on the ground of adultery.

Strauss's
view of
Jesus.

Strauss, in *The Old Faith and the New*, tries to father this strict view of the marriage tie on the asceticism of our Lord, and of the Apostle Paul. Jesus, it seems, had too little experience to be able to solve such a complex problem as that of divorce. The necessary experience was indeed not possible to him, “not only because he himself was unmarried, but also because, on his own showing, he was adverse to interfering with the family concerns of others.”¹

Strauss's in-
conclusive
reasoning.

Was there ever a more inconclusive reason? Jesus was averse to interfering with family concerns; yet He laid down a law of marriage which legislated for every family, and tied up its liberty! Was this course of conduct not straining out the gnat, after swallowing the camel? And how super-

¹ *The Old Faith and the New* (English Translation), p. 293.

ficial is the criticism which makes the unwillingness of Jesus to implicate Himself in personal disputes, such as the division of an inheritance, a proof of inability to estimate the conditions of a great moral problem ! Even from the rationalistic standpoint, this view of the capacity of Jesus has no valid foundation ; for if there was one region more than another in which He was at home, it was the region of moral forces, the proof of which is, that His religion, as a moral force, has ruled the civilized world for eighteen centuries, and that it still retains the dew of its youth.

St. Paul, it seems, was an ascetic likewise on the subject of marriage. This also is a somewhat shallow criticism. The judgment which he delivered on marriage was in reply to questions put by a particular community ; and as it was qualified by the consideration that his advice was given "for the present distress,"¹ that is, as suitable in the peculiar circumstances of the early church, it cannot fairly be regarded as applicable to all times and circumstances. If we take the writings of St. Paul as a whole, we find no cause to conclude that he looked on the married state as in any degree less holy than the unmarried. Family life has a bright and attractive aspect in his writings. No names are more honoured than those of Aquila and Priscilla, of Andronicus and Junia. There is no

Invalid
even from a
rationalistic
point of
view.

Asceticism
ascribed to
St. Paul.

The bright
side of
family life
in St. Paul.

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 26.

cloud of suspicion over those parts of his Epistles where he gives directions to parents and children. The names of the mother and the grandmother of Timothy emit a perpetual fragrance. His view is summed up in a short text in the Epistle to the Hebrews (which if it was not his writing, is acknowledged to have been written by one of similar views and spirit), "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled."

Secularist
views of the
marriage
tie.

The view of marriage which we find now advocated by secular leaders is, that it ought to be capable of dissolution simply on the ground of the mutual desire of those who have entered into it.

"If two people enter into a contract for their mutual comfort and advantage, and the contract issues in mutual misery and loss, why should not the contract be dissolved? . . . For the sake of every one concerned, an unhappy marriage should be easily dissolvable; the married couple would be better and happier for the separation; their children, if they have any, would be saved from the evil effect of continual family jars, and from the loss of respect for their parents caused by the spectacle of constant bickering; the household would be spared the evil example of the quarrels of its heads; society would see less vice, and fewer scandalous divorce suits. In all cases of contract, save that of marriage, those who make can, by mutual consent, unmake; why should those who make the most important contract of all be deprived of the same right?"¹

Shelley's views are endorsed :—

To be
dissolved
when love
decays.

"A husband and wife ought to continue so long united as they love each other; any law which should bind them to co-habitation for one moment after the decay of their affection

¹ *Marriage as it was, as it is, and as it should be.* By Annie Besant. p. 43.

would be a most intolerable tyranny, and the most unworthy of toleration. . . . The connection of the sexes is so long sacred as it contributes to the comfort of the parties, and is naturally dissolved when its evils are greater than its benefits. There is nothing immoral in this separation.”¹

Persons who have carried out these views contrary to the law, are held up as worthy of all honour.

“Mary Wollstonecraft acted on the same theory in her own life, and her daughter was united to the poet Shelley while Shelley’s first wife was living, no legal divorce having severed the original marriage. Richard Carlile’s second marriage was equally illegal. In our own days the union of George Henry Lewes and George Eliot has struck the keynote of the really moral marriage. Mary Wollstonecraft was unhappy in her choice, but in all the other cases the happiest results accrued. It needs considerable assurance to brand these great names with immorality, as all those must do who denounce as immoral unions which are at present illegal.”²

“Society will, ere long,” says another writer, “be glad enough to assimilate contracts between man and woman to contracts between partners in business.”

Illegal
marriage
vindicated
as moral.

Mary Wol-
stonecraft,
Carlile, and
H. Lewes.

¹ *Marriage, as it is, and as it should be*, p. 48.

² *Ibid.* p. 58. The instances specified are not very happy. Do they not recall the tragic end of Shelley’s wife, when she found herself deserted for another, the suicide in the Serpentine? As for George Eliot, we may well admit her brilliant talents, and admire much in her character; we may admit that her influence on Lewes was beneficial, and that she aimed at great good; but who can forget the everlasting sadness that pervades her writings, and was mirrored on her very face? Who can believe that in her own consciousness she attained satisfaction of heart, the peace that passeth understanding? Besides, it is impossible to tell how much she owed to the Christian influences under which she spent her first twenty years. Would she have had the same conception of the value of life, and the same sense of the obligation to spend it well, had she known no other religion than Comtism, and never looked out on the world from the

Cases of
Shelley and
George Eliot.

The real question at issue.

This is really what it comes to. It is needless to discuss the question whether marriage ought to be dissoluble not only on the ground of adultery, but on that of cruelty, or of habitual drunkenness, or of insanity. The opponents of marriage as it now is, would be satisfied with no such enactments. The contract of marriage must be brought down to the level of a contract between partners in business, and the one must be rendered voidable precisely in the same way as the other.

Objections to the Secularist view.

Is this, let us ask, apart altogether from Scripture, a fair or reasonable method of treating the contract of marriage?

1. Does it not overlook the very delicate and solemn nature of the relation established in marriage between man and wife? That contract is indeed without a parallel. It places the parties in a relation of intimacy and delicacy unapproached in any other. By the very sacredness of the relation, it sanctifies acts which in any other circumstances would be shameful. The sanctity

Disregard of the very peculiar relation of marriage.

stand-point of the Gospel? But even had it been otherwise with her, we object to taking the cases of a few strong-minded persons as fair examples of what might be expected were the practice advocated universal. The point contended for is that the marriages of such persons, though illegal, cannot be considered immoral, because the connection led to favourable results. We repudiate the theory of morality which thus reduces it to expediency. Here we reach a first principle where we are absolutely at war with all Secularists.

which it confers, arises from the fact that the parties are wholly and unalterably for each other. If the notion creep in that they are not wholly and unalterably for each other, the sanction and the sanctity of their intimacy are alike impaired. The enamel is broken, the seal of consecration is torn away ; and the union, which formerly bore the mark of heaven, is brought down to the level of mere animality.

2. This view of marriage subverts the provision of nature for the welfare of the young. What is to become of the children when a marriage is broken up on the ground that the father and mother are tired of each other? What can become of them, at the very best, but that they are handed over to one of the parents? But is it not the plan of nature that the children shall have the benefit of both parents? It is not Nature's provision that children be brought up (except in cases of bereavement) by only one parent, but under the combined influence of their own father and mother. What becomes of the unity of home when it is liable to be broken up by the divorce of one parent from the other, followed, in both cases perhaps, by new marriages? Will its sacred memories and gracious influences continue when one parent is here and another there, each united to another, but united perhaps only to be separated again? It is only too evident that the

Disregard
of the
interests of
the children.

The
plan of
nature
commits the
children to
their own
parents.

children of a former marriage, when committed to the charge of either the one divorced parent or the other, will be found to be in the way. Something like great Foundling Hospitals will have to be provided for the reception of those whose parents, having tired of one another, have agreed to dissolve partnership. Family life will be exchanged for barrack life, and the evils liable to be engendered by the association of a horde of children together cannot but come in all their bitterness.

Discouragement of the spirit of forbearance.

3. An arrangement which would terminate the union of husband and wife whenever they happened to tire of it, would greatly discourage the exercise of forbearance toward each other when differences unfortunately did arise. To bear and forbear is an indispensable rule when persons are bound by a lifelong relation; to arrange some *modus vivendi* if tastes differ, to find some method of rubbing on together in spite of the friction which there sometimes is. Good sense and mutual forbearance can do wonders. Where a slight inflammation appears in a bodily organ, it is easy by a little care to prevent it from increasing, and in a day or two, probably, it disappears. On the other hand, if it be rubbed or roughly handled, or exposed to cold, or to violent effort, the inflammation may increase till it becomes a malignant tumour. So in married life, many a little irritation, borne patiently, passes away and is forgotten; resisted

The effect of mutual forbearance.

and striven over, it becomes a source of deadly quarrel. To take away the encouragement to forbearance, and substitute a policy which would lead to the extreme remedy of divorce whenever a serious difference arose, would surely show a lamentable want of practical wisdom, intensifying the bitterness of strife, and ever driving it on to the most painful consummation.

4. Such a policy would, moreover, leave little opportunity for repentance and reconciliation. Once the tie was severed, severed it must remain. Time might show that a mistake had been made, that there was no irreconcilable difference between the parties, that they might have gone on harmoniously together, and that the great boon of a united home might have remained for the children ; but it may be too late for them to retrace their steps. Besides the obstacle which the very absurdity of the proposal to renew their union would create, one or both of them might have formed another alliance, rendering a return to the *status quo* impossible. Where would be the wisdom of an arrangement which left little or no room for repentance in regard to a step so momentous ? which hurried them on from one rash act to another, without giving opportunity of contrition for the past, or time for reflecting as to the future ?

We have been arguing the question simply on the grounds of nature, because those with whom

The effect of taking away the spirit of forbearance.

Opportunity of repentance taken away.

The Secularist view against nature.

The effect of reducing marriage to a mere civil contract.

we have to argue it will admit no supernatural revelation. What they quarrel with is the doctrine of marriage laid down by Christ; if they admitted His authority there would be no question at all. Our argument is substantially, that marriage, reduced to the level of a mere civil contract, would not only bring down the relation of the sexes to a coarse, unsanctified connection, but would subvert the whole arrangements of nature for the happy and prosperous training of the young, and would precipitate an extreme remedy for evils which might otherwise be obviated by good sense and mutual forbearance.

*Allegation
that nature's
method is
faulty.*

But it may be contended, that what is called the arrangement of nature is a faulty arrangement, and in practice gives rise to evils so great that in order to remedy them you must have recourse to easy divorces. If it were true that there is a natural affinity between all married persons, and if it were true that nature provides such a store of mutual love as is sufficient to smooth all friction and adjust all differences, there would be no harm in making the bond of matrimony so close that only unfaithfulness should dissolve it. But the very reverse is notoriously true. Whatever feeling men and women may have to one another before marriage, it is notorious that afterwards it is often succeeded by indifference, indifference by aversion, and aversion by disgust.

It is notorious that when the law compels man and woman to remain together as husband and wife, after their hearts are utterly alienated, it turns their home into a fiery pandemonium, sets before their children a humiliating spectacle of bickering and strife, and compels them to take part with either the one parent or the other, thus bequeathing the quarrel to the next generation and making perpetual a feud which, by the timely divorce of the parties, would have been brought to a speedy end. Are we to exalt into "a plan of nature," an arrangement which is so painfully fruitful of contention and misery?

Yes, it is still the plan of nature ; but it is the plan of nature perverted, frustrated, made abortive by some evil habit or vile indulgence which hinders the intention of nature from being fulfilled, as really and as wholly as a nail driven into the works of a watch hinders it from indicating the proper time.

First among these perverting influences we must place the habit of drunkenness. The proceedings of our divorce courts make it painfully evident that this is the first root of bitterness and the first cause of mischief in cases without number where, ultimately, marriages are dissolved by reason of adultery or of cruelty. Next, we must specify the cherishing of lawless passion for members of the opposite sex. Wherever such passion is allowed

The
plan of
nature
perverted.

The
effect of
drunken-
ness.

Lawless
passion.

to get a footing in the heart, it must sooner or later engender alienation in the other spouse—alienation will grow to dislike, and dislike to distrust ; while in the guilty one—lust, when it has conceived, will bring forth sin, and sin when it is finished will bring forth death. The remedy here is a stern resistance to unlawful passion, a firm determination to trample it under foot lest, being tolerated, it lead to consequences at which the

Marriages
from merely
worldly
motives.

heart at first cannot but shudder. Then there is the too common case of marriages with which the affinity of hearts has nothing to do, but which result from pride, greed, ambition, love of splendour, luxury, and worldly honour. The Secularist virtually says, in reference to such unions, that they need not be viewed with much horror, because if they do not work harmoniously, the law ought to be such that they shall be easily dissolved. The Christian counsel to all who may be tempted to think of such a marriage is, Beware of an unhallowed connection, which may lead to life-long misery. It is a common saying, “Love will come in due time ;” but if there be no love to begin with, a growing coldness, deepening into a rooted aversion, is far more likely to be the result.

Hitherto we have been dealing with the objection on grounds common to the Secularist and the Christian. But we cannot leave the subject without examining it also on the ground of Scripture.

The
Christian
counsel.

Let us remember that, according to Scripture, marriage and the family constitution were instituted while the human race was yet un-fallen, and while the relation between God and man existed in all its fulness of blessing.

The
Scripture
view of the
subject.

The fall did not abrogate the institution, but it made a great change in the conditions under which it existed. Whenever man broke with God, there was withdrawn from him a gracious influence which tended to keep his inner nature orderly and good, and to make all its movements sweet and comfortable. With the disruption of man's relation to God, the spirit of discord took possession of his nature. Discord ensued between man and God, discord in man's own soul between passion and conscience, discord in his social relations, discord between man and wife. If the family constitution does not always work well, if the inseparable union between husband and wife often leads to misery, if the home is often the scene of strife and violence, the primary cause of it is the discord which has been introduced between God and man. The true remedy for the evils that prey on the family constitution is, not to abolish it, but to apply that restorative which God has graciously provided for the purpose. The Gospel is the remedial dispensation, designed to restore, first of all, happy fellowship with God, and then

The
effect of
the fall.

Discord
introduced.

The true
remedy for
the evils
that prey on
the family
constitution.

The
Gospel
brings
harmony.

the happy working of all human relations. Jesus Christ came into the world not only to save the individual, but to regenerate society. He suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God. The institutions of nature damaged by the fall can be restored to pristine efficacy only through His influence. For setting the family institute on its true basis there is a special provision. The relation of Christ to His Church and the love of Christ for His Church are alike the pattern and the fountain of the Christian husband's love for his wife.¹ Only let the love of Christ take full possession of men's hearts, and a loving spirit will be sure to pervade all their relations to one another.

Man like a
planet
broken away
from the
sun.

He must be
restored to
his true
orbit.

One of our great preachers has compared the career of man departing from God, to that of a planet flying off from its relation to the sun. As the planet dashes into space, its internal movements must become disturbed, vegetation must come to a standstill, life itself must rapidly ebb away. How silly the thought that such things could be remedied by any readjustment of planetary arrangements! Till the planet returns to its orbit every attempt to restore its primitive order must be a failure. So, till man returns to God by the way which infinite mercy has provided, the discords which sin has caused can never pass away.

¹ Ephes. v. 25.

“Peace on earth” was proclaimed from heaven when Jesus was born; too often the gracious influence has been rejected, even by those who have professed to honour His name; but where it has been received and welcomed, the healing process has come into operation, and the discords of sin have given way to the harmonies of grace.

Admitting, then, that in a vast number of cases marriage is the parent of discord and misery, which of two policies is the more worthy of support with a view to remedy this grievous evil? Are we to change the marriage bond as it has hitherto been, make the relation of married persons slack and easy, tie the knot so loosely that a very slight pull will undo it, and place what has hitherto been the most sacred of human obligations at the mercy of the whim of either party? Or shall we try to get this relation penetrated by the love of Christ, to bring the spirit of forbearance and forgiveness to bear on actual divergences, to exalt men’s sense of the dignity and sacredness of the conjugal relation,—symbol as it is of the union of Christ and His Church; shall we try to quicken the consciences of parents in regard to the welfare of their children, to induce them to extend their view beyond the horizon of the present life, and to think of the momentous consequences for evermore of faithfulness on the one hand and neglect on the other?

Two methods of remediying admitted evils.

Are we to relax the bond?

Or shall get the relation penetrated by the love of Christ?

Efficacy of Christianity sneered at.

We know how our opponents would turn this argument. Christianity indeed! Why, the very marriages that we deplore most are those of people that call themselves Christians. Church and chapel going people, too, many of them! Even though they may make no religious profession personally, they are members of a community which is dominated by the Christian Church, and in which the spirit of Christianity may be considered to be as strong and influential as it ever can be.

The sneer partly true, but mainly undeserved.

To a certain extent, we must accept the reproach. We cannot deny that there is a measure of truth in it. We cannot deny that there are hypocrites in the church, and a great mass of indifferent persons to whom religion, if any thing, is but a name and a form. But while we admit the reproach up to a certain point, we take our stand at that point, and refuse to go further. We maintain, with little fear of challenge, that among those who manifestly have received the Spirit of Christ, and who visibly live under His influence, you have not only comparatively few instances of marriages of misery, but you have far the most frequent spectacle of families living together in unity, of happy, affectionate, beautiful households, on which the sunshine of heaven sweetly rests. We could give an instance known to us in high life where a foreign nobleman was drawn to Pro-

testantism through admiration of the spirit of an English Christian home. Yes, and you find it, too, in humble life, where Providence has given nothing but food and raiment, coarse enough food and plain enough raiment, and even that secured only by an unceasing round of hard toil and patient endurance. What but the Spirit of Christ could produce the serene contentment and patient laboriousness of which we have the picture in "the Cottar's Saturday Night"? What but the Spirit of Christ could inspire that happy view alike of the past and of the future in a poor old couple's life which gives such pathos to the well-known Scotch song—

John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither,
And mony a cantie day, John,
We've had wi' anither ;
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go ;
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo.

Surely a Christian nation has not come to this, that it will repudiate the Christian remedy for evils that are indeed very grievous. We are not yet prepared to dash in pieces the Christian ideal of marriage and the family, and abandon all effort to have it realized. What we most earnestly desire is, that the Christian Church should be more careful to instruct her people

The
desideratum

in the Bible conception of marriage and its responsibilities, and to press the truth that a well-ordered family is the source of all that is best and brightest, alike in Church and State, the best nursery for the life that now is and for that which is to come.

II. THE NURTURE OF CHILDREN.

Institutions
versus
homes.

Are not
institutions
better?

ANOTHER common objection to the family has reference to the best arrangement for bringing up children to be orderly, respectable and useful citizens. We say it is family life. But in how many instances is the upbringing they get in their homes worse than useless—an education of blows and curses, of drunkenness and debauchery, of sin and misery. And in many other cases, how utterly unsuited do the parents appear to be for such work ; so silly, ignorant, and aimless ; so unable to estimate the bearing of moral forces ; so regardless of the nature of children ; so utterly blind to what is calculated to pervert and even ruin them. Would it not be better to change the system radically, to gather all children into large institutions where they would live as well as be taught, where their moral nature would be cultivated, their habits watched and corrected, and influences brought to bear upon them, fitted to turn them into good citizens and exemplary men and women ?

That this question should be seriously proposed is hardly to be wondered at, considering that there are so many cases in which, in consequence of the wickedness of their parents, children must be separated from them if they are not to grow up as pests of society.

Admitted in competence of many parents.

That persons of this order have practically renounced the rights of parents, and are not to be entrusted with the nurture of their families, hardly any one will now deny. It is their misconduct that has made the case of neglected children one of the most pressing, as it is one of the most painful problems of the day. The care of neglected children is the most conspicuous and extensive of the undertakings of modern philanthropy. By ragged schools and reformatories, training ships and brigades, emigration homes and similar institutions, the attempt is made to supply to neglected children somewhat of the care and nurture of which the wickedness of their own parents has deprived them. Benevolent persons stand to them *in loco parentis*, and endeavour to give them some of the advantages that are to be found in a well-doing family. No man can be conversant with such institutions without being convinced that there is an urgent necessity for them. A little child was lately brought to a Home, with a singular history. A man had been found by the police lying in the street quite drunk.

Attempts to supply needed training and nurture to neglected children.

Singular history of an infant

The policeman carried him to the cells. When his coat was unbuttoned, an infant was found, who had contrived to fall asleep in that strange bed. The man had been on his way to the jail, to visit his wife who was a prisoner there. He intended to take their child with him, but temptation overtook him on the way. It was a miracle that the child escaped suffocation. If it had been suffocated it would only have reaped a little earlier the doom which the reckless habits of its parents were fitted to entail.

When are
parents to be
superseded.

In such cases, no doubt, you must supersede the family. But this is an extreme remedy, applicable only to the very worst cases. And before this course is resorted to, every effort should be made to stimulate the sense of parental responsibility. Moreover, it should be borne in mind, that when severed from their children and relieved from all responsibility regarding them, parents are apt to become more hardened, more careless, more hopeless. Love for her offspring, though it does dwindle and finally vanish under the dominion of vice, is the last good thing that disappears in a dissipated woman.

Wholesale
separation
of neglected
children
from their
parents
suggested
by many.

To many it appears not only a simpler but a more efficient remedy for the evils of parental neglect, to take neglected children wholesale from their parents and bring them up elsewhere. But to make a promiscuous practice of this would be

to do infinite harm. When Dr. Guthrie instituted his Ragged Schools, he provided no sleeping accommodation for his children; at night they returned to their parents; because of all things he was most anxious to preserve the interest of the parents in their children, and the interest of the children in their parents. We are not warranted to separate the children wholly from their parents except under two conditions: first, when it is certain that the children would be ruined if they should continue to live with them; and, second, when the parents are willing to give them up, let us say for emigration. This constitutes a very serious test; and it may be assumed with tolerable certainty that when ill-doing parents come to this, it is a case for severing all that remains of the parental tie. But without some such test we should utterly shrink from any proposal to remove children from the charge even of parents who have little or no capacity to train them in the way they should go.

Dr. Guthrie's method.

Two conditions.

A serious test for ill-doing parents.

Another important question presents itself. When children must be severed from parents, either through death or other necessary causes, what kind of arrangements ought to be made for bringing them up? Should they be consigned to large institutions, to poor-houses, or barracks, where perhaps hundreds of them would be together, sharing the advantages of the place; or

ought the family system to be preserved, as far as circumstances will permit?

Experience
in connec-
tion with
the Poor-
law.

It is a most interesting fact that in connection with our Poor-law system both methods have been tried; and that the result has been wholly against the plan of large, barrack-like institutions, and in favour of the system of arrangements based on the preservation of domestic or family life.¹

System of
boarding
out.

The system of "boarding-out," that is, of placing pauper children under the charge of respectable families in the country, to be brought up like other children, has long prevailed in Scotland; recently it has been introduced in other parts of the United Kingdom; and now it is in operation not only there, but in the Australian and New Zealand colonies; and in all cases it has been attended with the most gratifying results.

Its benefits.

A comparison between the children brought up in the poor-house and those boarded out in the country, brings out some remarkable results. In the first place, the physical condition is far better. Do what managers may, they cannot get rid of ophthalmia and skin disease in poor-house children. But when the children are boarded out, these

¹ See a paper entitled *Boarding Out*, read at the Birmingham meeting of the British Association (September, 1886), by Wilhelmina L. Hall, F.R.Met.Soc., which has been separately published by Hatchards. See also *The Boarding Out of Pauper Children in Scotland*. By John Skelton, Secretary of the Poor Law Board in Scotland.

diseases entirely disappear, partly, no doubt, through the beneficial influence of country air. In the next place, poor-house children have a downcast, sullen, indifferent look, arising from the absence of the usual conditions of child-life; in the country they look as bright and cheerful as others. In the third place, a much larger proportion of the children do well. Seldom or never does a boarded-out pauper child return to pauperism; whereas, from certain returns obtained by Mr. Henley, it appears that of children brought up in workhouse schools, fourteen per cent. males and twenty-six per cent. females returned to the workhouse after having got employment. In the fourth place, the boarded-out children get on much better at schools. And last, not least, the system is actually cheaper. In certain workhouses in Birmingham the average cost of maintaining a child in the workhouse was £13 4s. 4d. per annum, whereas in the boarding-out families it was but £10 18s. 3d. Similar results have been obtained in the other communities; but indeed the matter is now beyond the reach of controversy; and the plan of nature is vindicated all round the world.

And it is because the plan of nature is followed in those emigration schemes with which we connect the names of Miss Macpherson, Miss Rye, Dr. Barnardo, Mr. Quarrier, and others, that the results have been so remarkably interesting and

Mr. Henley's
returns.

Experience
in connec-
tion with
emigration
of poor
children.

satisfactory. Where the system is carried out faithfully in all its details, the children are first prepared for emigration in homes in this country, where, in strange contrast to what has been their experience under their parents, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ is not only made known to them theoretically, but is exemplified in the treatment they receive.

The story of the transformation which the children undergo when adopted and cared for like the ordinary children of a Christian home, is more like a fairy tale than a sober narrative of facts.

The effect
on children
when cared
for like
ordinary
children in
a Christian
home.

An instance. From personal connection with one of these schemes, the present writer can testify in the most unqualified way to their success. He can never forget the story of two motherless girls of ten and eight found by a city missionary in a garret in Edinburgh, where there was neither furniture, fuel, nor food, left by a drunken and worthless father to roam about the streets and find their living as best they might. Brought to the Edinburgh Emigration Home for Destitute Children,¹ they were clothed and taught and cared for, and in due time sent to Canada, and taken care of by an excellent woman in Toronto, who brought them up in the ways of godliness and industry. When ten years after, the present writer saw them in the home of their adoption, the one in business as a dressmaker, the other a successful pupil teacher, it

¹ At 6, Lauriston Lane, under the auspices of Mrs. Blaikie.

seemed hardly possible to identify them with the waifs who had been found in rags and wretchedness in the dingy Edinburgh garret. And this is but one example of thousands. Out of numbers of children that have been sent to Canada from the Edinburgh Emigration Home, at least ninety-five per cent. have done well, and less than five per cent. have been unsatisfactory. The experience of larger emigration schemes is similar. Had the children been massed in great establishments in Canada, instead of being distributed over the country in family homes, it is not unlikely that these proportions would have been reversed.

Results of
the work of
the Edin-
burgh
Emigration
Home.

Similar results are obtained in this country when children are brought up in homes limited to a small number, about twelve or fifteen, each under the charge of a home mother, and, where it is necessary, a home father likewise. Instances are found in Mrs. Meredith's Homes at Addlestone, and Mr. Quarrier's at Bridge of Weir. As much of the spirit and ways of an ordinary home is maintained in them as the circumstances admit of. The family is not too large for each child to have in it a separate place; individual character has room to develop, birthdays may be kept, appropriate tokens of interest and affection may be given on them, and all the little experiences may be kept up, that in ordinary circumstances give their charm to humble Christian homes. The persons in charge

Experience
of children's
homes.

The
benefits of
the family
plan.

are chosen for the proof they have given of ability to manage children, and to diffuse over the house the kind of influence there is in a well-conducted family. By keeping to the family plan, the evils of the workhouse are avoided, and full scope is given to the development of character. The children are neither surly nor stupid ; they are neither cast in the uniform workhouse mould, nor afflicted with ophthalmia and serofula, nor indifferent to their success in the world ; but, with few exceptions, bright, buoyant, and active, and eager to succeed in life.

The
Christian
family the
best nursery
for the
Church and
the State.

In conclusion, we may safely affirm that the Christian family, moulded by the rules and actuated by the spirit of the Gospel, has proved the best nursery both for the Church and for the State. The best Christians and the best citizens are those who grow up under its shadow. Instituted in Eden, the family constitution still retains a flavour of paradise, and its joys are still touched with the brightness and purity of those days of innocence. When our Lord came into the world, He sanctified the institution by becoming Himself a woman's son and a member of a human family. The most sublime and inscrutable of all relations, that of the first and second Persons of the God-head to each other, is denoted by words which have their origin in family life. Such an institution

surely deserves to be cherished with peculiar care. Its love is the deepest that earth supplies ; its joys the purest ; and its influence the best, the strongest, and the most abiding.

The institution deserves to be cherished.

APPENDIX.

INFLUENCE OF THE CONFESSORIAL ON THE FAMILY.

THERE is a well-known hindrance to family unity and prosperity of very ancient date to which we must specially advert. The Confessional breaks up the unity of the household and introduces a foreign element hostile to nature's plan of harmonious combination. The plan of nature which joins two human beings in heart and hand, which makes them partners of each other's joys and sorrows, which makes them counsellors to each other, and renders their home a sanctuary by the very privacy which surrounds it is shattered at its very centre, when a man from the outside is permitted to enter, ascertain the most secret thoughts and feelings of wife and daughter, and give directions for their conduct. The spell of mutual confidence is broken, and alienation and strife are produced. No wonder that the bitterest feelings of educated men are roused against the Confessional if it thus turns their best solace into a bitter trouble and robs them of their most coveted joy. In ages of comparative ease and quiet, the loss was less acutely felt ; but in these busy times, as Michelet has well shown, the priestly invasion of the home is a fearful infliction.

The Confessional.

"It is because we are workmen and return home fatigued every evening that we need more than others the repose of the heart. Our board and fireside must again become our own ; we must no longer find instead of repose at home some old dispute which has been settled by science and the world, nor hear from our wife or child on our pillow a lesson learned by heart, and the words of another man. . . . To marry a woman whose soul is in the possession of another man is to marry a divorce.¹

Michelet on priestly influence.

¹ In the original, *le divorce*.

Things cannot go on so. Marriage must become marriage again, and the husband must associate with his wife in the march of ideas and progress more intimately than he has hitherto done, assisting her when weary, and helping her to advance at an equal pace.”¹

The failure
of the
Church
of Rome in
building up
the family.

If there be one thing more than another that the Church of Rome has failed in, it is in building up family life. Its sacrament of matrimony has given no true sanctity to marriage. Its nunneries and its monasteries have not exalted the virtue of chastity. Its celibate clergy have not had the chance of showing to the world the model of a Christian household, while by undertaking the direction of married persons, they have only confused and darkened relations infinitely delicate, which their mode of life unfits them for understanding. To quote again from Michelet :

Michelet on
“the
Priest.

“The priest, in the highest acceptance of the term, ought to be an old man, as he was at first, or at least a man of mature age, who having passed through the cares of this world and being well acquainted with family life, has been taught by his experience to understand the sense of the Great Family of the Universe. Seated among the old men, like the Elders of Israel, he would communicate to the young the treasures of his experience ; he would be the man for all parties, the man who belongs to the poor, the conciliating umpire to prevent law-suits, and the physician of health to prevent diseases. To be all that, something more is required than an excitable, hot-headed young man. He ought to be a man who has seen, learned, and suffered much, and who has at last found in his own heart the kind words which may comfort us on our way to the world to come.”²

¹ Michelet's *Priests, Women, and Families*, pp. xlvi.-xlviii. (English Translation).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 269, 270.

SOCIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

BY THE
REV. M. KAUFMANN, M.A.

AUTHOR OF

"SOCIALISM: ITS NATURE, ITS DANGERS, AND ITS REMEDIES CONSIDERED,"
"UTOPIAS, OR SCHEMES OF SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT, FROM SIR THOMAS
MORE TO KARL MARX," "SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM IN
THEIR PRACTICAL APPLICATION," "CHRISTIAN
SOCIALISM, ETC. ETC.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

CHARACTERISTICS of several varieties of Modern Socialism. Collectivism : its causes in the present condition of society, and the threatening consequences of its revolutionary tendencies. Close connection of the latter with Atheism. The social aspirations of this movement deserve attention, and must be met by fair argument, acknowledging what truth they contain, and laying bare the error with which they are intermixed. A bird's-eye view of the leading tenets of "Scientific Socialism" in its economic and ethical aspects is given, followed by a detailed examination (1) of the historical basis of Socialism, its insecurity ; (2) of the Socialistic analysis of the present social system ; its one-sided misapprehension and misrepresentations. (3) The nature of the "Co-operative Commonwealth," containing the positive proposals of Socialism for the reconstruction of society, compared with the ideal of the Christian Commonwealth. Christianity, considered as spiritual force in society. Social functions of the Christian Ministry. The idea of the Christian Brotherhood, and the application of Christian principle to co-operative modes of human association. Testimony from independent sources on the superiority of Christianity in its social influences over other religious systems, and its power of regenerating society, even as acknowledged by leading sceptics and agnostics. The Tract concludes with some practical suggestions of social amelioration, and indicates the limits of faith and hope in the moral and spiritual conquests of Christianity, affecting the future of society.

SOCIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

I.

VARIETIES AND OBJECTS OF SOCIALISM.



WHAT is Socialism? Generally speaking, it is a movement for the improvement of society, almost as old as civilized society itself, adapting its methods to the prevailing conditions at the time of its appearance.

Socialism a movement for the improvement of society.

In the present day we have several varieties of Socialism. There is the Socialism of the *Anarchists*, whose aim is the entire demolition of the present social order, without even a pretence of suggesting that form of Society which is to replace it. There is the opposite extreme of *Imperialistic*, or *State-socialism*, which would put the power of rectifying social abuses and imperfections into the hands of Autocratic Governments. The professed aims of both these revolutionary and reactionary forms of Socialism, however, are identical—*i.e.*, the reconstruction or reformation of Society, with a view to greater equality,

Anarchist Socialism.

State Socialism.

contentment, and happiness among all its members. Again, there are the two opposite extremes of compulsory *Collectivism* and voluntary *Co-operation*. The former demands that all land and capital, in fact, all the instruments of production, should be held in collective ownership, and be used by the community for the common good, instead of being held, as now, by private individuals for private advantage. The latter is in favour of industrial association by means of a free combination among individuals, all being inspired by higher social aims, and it is a view favoured by "Christian Socialists."

The essence of Socialism.

Thus we see the essence of Socialism is a comprehensive application of the principle of association to promote the good of *Society* as opposed to the isolated efforts of individuals each pursuing his own ends. It is a reversal of the theory on which the present social system rests, namely, that when each man pursues his own interest, all will profit in the end.

Socialism professes to remedy the excesses of Individualism.

Thus, in its recent developments, and as its modern name implies, Socialism professes to supply a remedy for the excesses of Individualism by a more perfect *social* organization, where the principle of co-operation shall more or less supplant that of competition, where private interest shall be secondary to public utility; in other words, where the welfare of society is the

first object, and the personal well-being of its members subordinate to this.

II.

COLLECTIVISM, THE SPECIAL SUBJECT OF THIS TRACT.

WE shall confine our attention to that form of Modern Socialism which we have characterized as Collectivism. The theory of this form of Modern Socialism is contained in the work of Karl Marx on Capital, and under his guidance Socialism has assumed its present philanthropical character. It ceases to be a political movement, and becomes a purely social or class movement, international and cosmopolitan, appealing to "the people" to work out their own emancipation throughout the civilized world, in the well-known words of the communistic manifesto : "Labourers of all nations, unite yourselves!"

Karl Marx
on Capital.

Modern
Socialism
national
and cos-
mopolitan.

The work of K. Marx is the text-book of Modern Socialism, and, as such, is used in translations and adaptations by Socialists in every country, from St. Petersburg to Madrid, from the Scandinavian to the Italian Peninsula, from London to Chicago. It has even penetrated the most anciently civilised country of Egypt, as well as the most recently colonized parts of Australia. The "Co-operative Commonwealth" by Laurence Gronlund, an American lawyer, which is accepted

Marx on
Capital the
Socialist
text-book
in every
country.

Gronlund's
Co-operative
Common-
wealth.

by Socialists, on both sides of the Atlantic, as an authoritative statement of their views, is a professedly popularized reproduction of the principles contained in the book of K. Marx. Our quotations are made in most instances from it.

III.

THE CAUSES, FORCES, AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE PRESENT MOVEMENT.

BEFORE we examine the leading tenets of this most recent form of Socialism or Collectivism, we must point out those causes in modern society which have given rise to the present movement, and those social forces which give it still momentum, as well as some of the possible consequences which may be expected from this so-called "crisis of the modern world," unless it be checked in its course, or directed into safe channels. This Socialism is primarily an idea, and must be opposed by ideas. And in treating it here simply as a conception of the mind, as a social criticism, and a putting forth of a social ideal, we shall find that as sinful selfishness is most frequently the source of social maladies, so the "salvation of society" must depend on the application of Christian principles, as a system of social therapeutics; in plain terms, that the healing of the sores of the social body politic is best brought about by the prescription of the Divine Physician, as laid down in the New Testament.

Collectivism
primarily
an idea
to be
opposed by
ideas.

Sinful
selfishness
the source
of social
maladies.

This explains the title of our tract, "Socialism and Christianity." It implies that the real solution of every great problem affecting man in society is to be sought in the true application of Christian principle.

The remedy is
to be found
in the
application
of Christian
principles.

What, then, are the special *causes* of our modern social discontents, and how far may Christianity be instrumental in removing them? They are to be found in the peculiar condition of society as now constituted, and that in a great measure is the result of two simultaneous revolutions, one political and the other industrial, during the past century. One of these has given greater political freedom and power by securing the representation of the people, whilst the other has increased to an enormous extent the "wealth of nations," by the introduction of steam and machinery, with all the appliances of recent scientific discoveries. This has produced a greater consciousness of inequality in the enjoyment of material things, with much dissatisfaction and disappointment at the comparatively small share accruing to the actual producers of wealth. The spread of education and enlightenment by means of cheap and easy locomotion has created a craving for comfort and luxuries to which many were formerly strangers, and which are now seen to be within reach only of a very small number. Hence the demand of the Have-nots to be admitted to the coveted privi-

The sense of
inequality
produced
by—

a. Increase
of political
power;

b. Increase
of wealth;

c. The
spread of
education;

leges of those who have, or are supposed to have, the capital of the world concentrated in their own hands. In addition to this, the theory of free contract makes the practical dependence of the employed on the employer more acutely felt, whilst in the very countries where the contrasts of wealth and poverty are greatest—viz., in England and the United States, the contrast between an equal share of *liberty* and material *inequality* is more accentuated. The increased facility of giving expression to social grievances is also one of the causes of popular discontent, aggravated by popular agitation, in the present day. The leaders of the movement in most cases are not working men, but men of superior training and position, whose generous sympathy for the people first induced them to think out and then to formulate the substance of popular grievances and the forms of the society of the future founded on a broader basis of equality. But there are also less scrupulous and less cultured representatives of labour, who in their speeches and pamphlets not infrequently appeal to the cupidity and other base passions of the populace, whose habit it is to exaggerate the faults of the present industrial system by misrepresentation and false assertions, such, for example, as that wealth is nothing but the accumulated pilferings and fleecings of the workers, which swell the profits of their

d. The theory of free contract;

e. Increased freedom of discussion.

Two kinds of leaders—

Men of superior training and position—

Men who appeal to popular cupidity

employers; whilst their writings, such as they are, contain many coarse incitements to class hatred and violence, seasoned with jibes at religion, and irreverent jests at the expense of existing social institutions and their sacred associations which arguments cannot reach. To mention them is to pronounce judgment upon them. Suffice it to say that the avowed object of this class of Socialist leaders is not only the entire destruction of the existing social order, but also what is called the “Dechristianization of Society.” The same causes threaten Society and Christianity alike. Thus one of these exponents of “Communistic Infidelity,” M. Yves Guyot, a prominent member of the Municipal Council of Paris, in a volume of Studies on the Social Doctrines of Christianity, acknowledges that the revolution (*i.e.*, the social revolution as conceived by him) is “Satanic in its essence,” whilst the title of one of the Blanquist prints sufficiently indicates the Atheistic tendencies of this body of French Anarchists: “*Ni Dieu, ni Maître*” (neither God, nor Master). All this implies rebellion against every authority, human or divine, on the ground that the claims of supernatural religion are inconsistent with liberty and justice, that they form a serious impediment to social progress, because Christianity is represented as requiring of its adherents implicit obedience, and so becoming an instrument of social oppression.

The destruction and de-christianization of Society aimed at by the last-named class.

The admission of M. Yves Guyot that the social revolution is Satanic in its essence.

Rebellion against all authority implied in it.

Opposition
to every
form of
positive
religion.

The consolations of religion are rejected with scorn as "drafts on eternity," which cannot be honoured, as there is "No hereafter." Not only the party of Dynamite, but members of the advanced wing of Social Democrats, declare in equally violent language their fierce opposition to every form of positive religion, actually condemning the father of Modern Socialism, the Duke of Saint Simon, because in his work, "*New Christianity*," he puts religion at the head of his socialistic programme. Sometimes this kind of antagonism is not so much hostility against religion, as an undefined anti-clerical feeling, because the ministers of religion are regarded as "a sort of sacred gendarmerie," "black dragoons," and the like; whilst at other times it amounts to a kind of neutral hostility, rather than benevolent neutrality, as in the following extracts from an article which appeared in *Justice*, the organ of the Social Democratic Federation, in one of the March numbers of last year, on "Social Democracy and Christianity:"

"It (*i.e.*, Social Democracy) is purely material. It is concerned neither with religion nor ethics; it is neither Christian nor anti-Christian . . . The teachings of Socialism are material and economical, not spiritual . . . There is nothing in Christianity, so far as we can discern, that militates against its disciples advocating Social Democracy. On the contrary, it appears to inculcate the principles of universal equality and brotherhood."

Socialist
views of
primitive
Christianity.

This reminds us of the other assertion often made by Socialists that in its original promulgation Christianity favoured social revolution. Thus the

Divine sympathy of Christ with the poor is travestied into incitements to social revolt, and Christianity itself is denominated a “Proletarian movement” in Judæa. At the same time, it is added, whilst primitive “Christianity was the International Society proclaimed in heaven and earth,” in its further development

“it has become a partizan of ancient slavery ; it represented serfdom until the outbreak of the Revolution ; it still defends it at the present moment ; it is indignant at popular demands, and preaches submission and resignation ; exhorting the people to accept without complaint every form of legal servitude.”

Alleged
further
development
of Chris-
tianity.

This aspect of the movement, on which we shall not further dwell, marks an advanced stage of Socialism in its anti-Christian tendencies. Lassalle said that the labourers are the rock on which the Church (by which he means society) of the future must be built. The utterances quoted above are an attempt to hurl the “Rock of Ages,” on which rests the hope of Christianized humanity, into the yawning deep. But views like these are symptomatic of a malady which lies deeper. They show that the social aspirations of those so addressed are moving on a lower level than formerly ; they indicate the prevalence of materialistic views of life, and the secularizing influences of Utilitarianism. In a companion article to that quoted above from *Justice*, on “Social Democracy and Morals,” we are told

The pre-
valence of
materialistic
views of
life.

“that Social Democracy is not concerned with religion or

ethics, but with the material conditions upon which these are based. It proposes such changes in these conditions as will make a higher morality possible, when the highest and noblest religious instincts of humanity shall have free play, and robbery shall cease to be.”¹

Religion and
morality
placed on a
physical
basis.

Means
adopted to
rouse the
masses.

Increase of
Socialist
votes in
America
and
Germany.

The
Socialist
vote in
Berlin and
in the
German
Empire.

Here, then, religion and morality alike are made to rest on a physical basis, and material well-being is made the principal end of existence. Yet the faith and hope of the men, thus steeped in materialism, are unbounded, and herein consists the great danger of the movement as a powerful revolutionary force in its ultimate *consequences*, threatening the very existence of society. By means of meetings, pamphlets, and party papers the masses are being roused, and by means of effective organization they are being drilled for action. The numbers of Socialist votes at the polls indicate the alarming increase of adherents, especially in countries where universal suffrage prevails; and this not only where the laws are in favour of free electioneering tactics, as in the American Republic, but also where exceptional legislation applies checks and counter-checks to oppose the Socialist propaganda in politics, as in the German Empire. In the former and the latter country it is specially noted that the most intelligent workmen are foremost in the movement. In Berlin itself, the centre of intelligence, the Socialist votes in 1887 had grown to

¹ *Justice*, 17th May, 1888.

thrice the amount of those recorded ten years before, *i.e.*, to 94,000, and at a bye-election in September, the year before last, Liebknecht, the leader of Social Democracy, was returned in one of its electoral districts, receiving 26,067 votes out of a total of 41,759; whilst those recorded throughout the Empire were 774,128, or a quarter of a million more than at the previous election. Thus, to use the words of one of the most philosophical exponents of Modern Socialism, Agathon de Potter, the social revolution "is advancing with giant's strides." Their hope is that when universal education has sufficiently enlightened the masses, and universal suffrage has enabled them to use this knowledge, then they will be able to bring about a bloodless revolution in their own favour by means of legislation; or, if not, when universal armaments shall have taught them the use of physical force, they will be able to set up the Universal Social Republic by force of arms—force, it is added with sardonic cynicism, has more than once been the midwife of revolutions.

Such are the consequences predicted as likely to follow from the spread of Modern Socialism by its own confession. To point out the danger to society in all this, and to recognise its magnitude without exaggeration is most important, especially if it be remembered that the real peril of the move-

The
expected
results of
universal
education
and
universal
knowledge.

Physical
force the
last
resource.

The
mixture of
truth and
error in
Socialistic
tenets.

Socialism
derives
force from
the under-
lying truth.

ment lies in the mixture of truth and error contained in its leading tenets. What gives it force is the underlying truth which appeals to men's conscience, and what truth there is in such ideas must be readily acknowledged and acted upon; whilst errors apt to be overlooked must be exposed, so as to restore the misguided to a reasonable mind, and thus to diminish the virulence of social dissatisfaction by timely attention to suitable remedies. It is first necessary, however, to give a concise but sufficiently comprehensive view of the leading principles of Socialism, and then to submit them to a more detailed critical test, carefully distinguishing the Divine from the demonic elements of social discontent.

IV.

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE SOCIALISTIC SYSTEM.

Socialist
views of—
The
French Re-
volution,—

Of modern
industry,—

THE social revolution to be effected, according to Socialists, is nothing else but a complement or a correction of the French Revolution at the close of the last century. That, indeed, secured freedom, but it also let loose upon the world the ungovernable forces of individual enterprise stimulated by the rise of modern industry. This is an economic process in which self-interest avowedly prevails, and it leads to the subjection of the weak by the strong, and ends in the final domination of capital over labour. The capitalist alone possesses

the instruments of production, machinery displaces independent manual labour in small trades, and wholesale production thus creates a new kind of industrial feudalism. Under the fiction of free contract the wages labourer loses his freedom, he must either starve or work on his employers' own terms. He does not even enjoy the security of slaves and serfs of old. They had no fears of the future; whilst in his case a commercial crisis may throw him on the pavement without means of livelihood. The old social bands have been destroyed, and new forms of voluntary association for the protection of labour are as yet too weak, and therefore insufficient for the purpose of securing for him even comparative independence. The triumphs of the industrial age leave the workers in a condition which destroys their sense of personal dignity; they have become "the hands" in the intricate division of labour in factories. Not only are there times when labour becomes a drug in the market, but at all times it is subject to the rise and fall in prices like every other commodity. In the dark ages human beings were often treated, or maltreated, as chattels; under the modern system they become impersonal appendages of machines, and this in strange contradiction to the spirit of equality of the nominally Christian institutions under which we live. The present social order is called a state of anarchy,

Of the
advantages
of the
capitalist,—

Of the
position of
the wages-
labourer
under free
contract in
contrast
with the
serfs,—

Of the
effect of in-
dustrialism
on the
dignity
of the
workman.

The
present
social order
called a
state of
anarchy.

for in the wild struggle of competition all are left to the natural laws of selection and the survival of the fittest, that is, the strongest. They may and do abuse their power, and the weak must go to the wall. Hence the claim of Socialists, as such, to bring about a true organization of society for the sake of society.

This is the case of Socialism against Individualism. It is an attempt to introduce social order into what is now said to be the chaos of anti-social passions, a more rational mode of working the resources of nature, a more scientific organization of labour for this purpose, and a more equitable distribution of the fruits of labour among all. Labour being the source of all wealth, the instruments of labour, such as fixed capital in land, buildings, and machinery, or circulating capital, all the result of the work of previous generations of labourers, and now the means of further increasing wealth, belong by right to the labourers, who, combining in common social labour and using their instruments collectively, would each contribute his share of labour, and receive a corresponding share of enjoyment. This can be done by labour cheques or notes, instead of money, as a measure of value and a means of exchange. For these would more accurately represent the value of work done. The holder would be entitled to exchange them for such commodities as he re-

What
Socialism
attempts,
and how it
proposes to
realize its
objects.

The
instruments
of labour
to belong
to the
labourers.

Each
one to
contribute
his share
of labour
and to
receive in
proportion.

quired out of the general storehouse, valued according to the cost of labour-time bestowed upon them. The “social state,” which is thus to carry on the processes of production and distribution, will be evolved in the course of historical development and in accordance with fixed social laws, the tendency of which may be observed now. The change contemplated here cannot be brought about by human agents independently—that was the error of pre-scientific Utopias—but may be assisted by the action of the State, stimulated into quicker movement by an intelligent minority of political thinkers and socialistic agitators, and their influence on the masses. Thus step by step, legislative changes forming transitional stages of social evolution, the new order will be introduced, and the old pass away. At length, the masses being sufficiently disciplined, and morally and mentally fitted, the new mechanism of universal production on a uniform plan will be set in motion, with central authorities to regulate it, themselves elected by universal suffrage. In this self-governing body each shall have according to his work, and each do work according to his power. Thus Modern Socialism becomes Collectivism, a name coined of late to define more clearly its salient doctrine as a constructive system. For it implies that all individual enterprise as now carried on with private capital, is in the society of the future to be carried

The
social state
to be
historically
evolved.

The
evolution
to be
aided by
the action
of the
State.

How the
new order
is to be
introduced
and
Modern
Socialism
become
Collectivism.

What
Collectivism
implies.

on by means of the collective capital of the whole community, associated in the production and distribution of wealth, under officers selected by common consent, either by the Society in its collective capacity of the "People's State," or by Confederated Communes, each enjoying separate autonomy. The governing body thus elected would assign, or allow, to each social unit—by which generally the family is meant—a certain amount of labour or sphere of work, and allot or grant to each of them the use of a corresponding amount of articles for consumption. But everything thus acquired may only be used for personal enjoyment, immediate or deferred, direct or by proxy. Accumulation is permitted, and assignment by bequest, but nothing may be used for the purposes of speculation and future aggrandisement. Wages, rent, interest would disappear with the present capitalistic system, and with them "the absolutism of feudalized capital." This will be the real emancipation of the labouring class, they will henceforth be their own masters and the makers of their own fortune by means of association among themselves. The present "Captains of Industry" will be pensioned off, and enjoy terminable annuities for life in lieu of the accumulated capital handed over to the new governing body, but all the working capital must be vested in that body for the future, to prevent the return of the system

Wages,
rent,
interest to
disappear
with the
present
system.

The present
"Captains
of
Industry"
to be
pensioned
or expro-
priated.

of capitalistic supremacy. Expropriation without compensation would be resorted to, failing this peaceful solution of the social question.

Thus it will be seen this is a very different kind of communism from those older visionary schemes of a "general divide" among all. The motto of modern Socialism is "to everybody according to his *deeds*;" the former demand was "to everybody according to his *needs*."

"Socialism takes human nature as it is. . . . If we define capitalism as the fleecing of the weak by the strong, communism may be said to be a fleecing of the strong by the weak.

"The charge often brought against Communism, that it means to abolish the institution of property, that it must result in crushing out all individuality, cannot be maintained against Socialism. Instead of taking property away from every one, it will enable every one to acquire property. It will confirm the institution of individual ownership by placing property on an unimpeachable basis: that of being the result of the owner's exertions. Property will belong to its possessor by the strongest of all titles, to be enjoyed as he thinks proper, *but not to be used as an instrument for fleecing his fellow-citizens.*"¹

Such are the economic aims of Socialism, based, as we saw, on the ethical principle of equity, not equality in the usual sense of the word.

Its real aim is to remove the causes which tend to perpetuate inequality, such, at least, as are of artificial creation. These artificial arrangements of society, say Socialists, are the growth of centuries; but as human institutions, laws, and customs have been altered from time to time, as

Contrast
between
older
schemes and
modern
Socialism.

The
economic
aims of
Socialism.

It aims at
removing
causes
which
perpetuate
inequality.

¹ *Co-operative Commonwealth*, p. 81. The italics are the present writer's.

slavery and serfdom have disappeared in favour of a more liberal social order, so, too, our present wage-system, which separates the labourer from the natural resources of the soil, and from the instruments of labour, and hinders him from a complete exercise of his natural faculties, must eventually disappear in its turn, to make room for free association. This will place him in a position to work out his own destiny. Therefore a reform or a revolution in the laws is to be effected by the State, in the first instance, and by means of transitional measures. As the 18th century destroyed feudalism and established civic liberty, so the 19th century must free the worker from the "tyranny of capital," and pave the road to a complete democratic organization of society. The moral sentiments and the political power are appealed to on the ground that it is both right and expedient to bring about these changes in favour of the "disinherited." The moral sympathies of philosophers and philanthropists are enlisted, and any form of "State Socialism" is welcomed as a means to an end—that end being a radical change in the present social system, to secure the material well-being of society as a whole.

The wage-system to make room for free association.

A revolution of laws to be effected by the State.

The task of the 19th century according to Socialism.

V.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE SOCIALISTIC SYSTEM.

FROM the foregoing bird's-eye view of the Socialistic system it will be seen that it regards society as in a state of flux, the result of past stages of development, and as advancing to another stage of social evolution; and, therefore, in critically examining its claims, we must consider it under the following three heads as affecting the past, present, and future of society:—

How
Socialism
regards
society.

(1) The "historical basis of Socialism," disposing of some of its baseless assertions.

The
claims of
Socialism as
affecting
the past,
present, and
future of
society.

(2) The "Socialist analysis of the phenomena of the era in which we are living," sifting the false from the true, and removing the glamour of exaggeration and misrepresentation.

(3) The social order anticipated in this new scheme, and the methods suggested for its realization, as well as the machinery which is to be employed in its future working.

In so doing we shall see that the latter, or constructive portion of Socialism is its weakest side, whilst a dispassionate consideration of socialistic prospects and adverse criticisms on the present state of society will afford some practical hints as to the duty of Christians, in their various capacities of philanthropists, employers of labour, or in the

The
constructive
side of
Socialism
the weakest.

The duty of
Christians.

exercise of their functions as citizens of the State, and members of spiritual communities, to use their power so as to avert a social catastrophe by moral reforms of the individual, and by social reforms, conceived in a Christian spirit, so as to bring about social amelioration, which shall secure social peace. Thus we shall keep before our mind the theoretical propositions and impracticable proposals of Socialism, and see where it is a “light to lead astray,” as well as the social problem itself, and see how it may be solved in a more excellent way. For it is not enough to give an exposition of erroneous opinions, and to be satisfied with an exposure of false principles of social science. We must find a substitute for them in the social doctrines implied, if not directly taught, in the gospel, and in their application to present social needs.

1. Historical Basis of Socialism.

The
alleged
source of
the evils of
society

As to socialistic criticism of the past we need not go much beyond the present century, since all the evils—real and supposed—in the present state of society, are ascribed by it to the rise of modern industry since the close of the 18th century. Some English socialists indeed go back to a remoter past and compare the “golden age” of Agricultural England in the 15th century with the iron age of Industrial England in the 19th century, in order to accentuate the inferiority of the latter

The 19th
compared
with the
15th
century.

as compared with the former. They account for this deterioration by saying that the "pressure brought to bear upon the innumerable small farmers and yeomen," compelled them to leave their holdings and find occupation in the centres of industry, that as a consequence a "landless class was created, with no property beyond the bare force of labour in their bodies," and "these people were slowly driven into the towns, where they formed the germ of our modern city-Proletariat," *i.e.*, a class depending entirely on wages, and perpetuating the same helpless and hopeless condition in their progeny. But this view of the subject will not satisfy the impartial student of history. Some truth, no doubt, is contained in it; but judging the past by the present, we cannot ascribe the dispossession of the soil in all cases to external force or craft. There must have been some deterioration in the moral and mental condition of those concerned before they yielded to this kind of pressure. The mere possession of land by peasant proprietors at any time is no security for their retaining it. In countries where peasant proprietorship flourishes, there are some who retain their hold on the land by frugality, diligence, and cautious and often penurious husbandry, and there are others who lose it by mortgage to the money-lender and the usurer, or dispose of it when allured by fabulous accounts of easy methods of

Socialist
view of the
alleged de-
terioration.

The
formation
of the
modern
city-Prole-
tariat.

The un-
satisfactori-
ness of the
Socialist
view of the
subject.

Prior de-
terioration
of the
people.

The evils
of over-
crowding
accounted
for.

getting a livelihood at a distance. In this way no doubt the “lack-land class” of the past was considerably increased; and the temptations offered to agricultural labourers to improve their position in factories and mines early in this century accounts for many of the evils of over crowding, and the uncertainty of employment, and “starvation wages” with which we have since become unhappily familiarized.

Admissions
to
Socialists.

It may also be admitted, with some qualifications, that the development of modern industry, synchronizing as it does with the abolition of feudalism and the unloosening of the forces of nature by the discoveries of steam and electricity, in other words, freedom of competition, with the wonderful impetus given to new forms of industry, produced “a fierce antagonism in the greed for gain,” which left behind in the race after wealth, a “vast residuum of impoverished humanity,” a reserve army of unskilled labour to swell the ranks of the unemployed, and to keep down the rate of remuneration among those who find work in the general scramble. The cheapness of commodities, itself the boasted result of this higher productivity, was, and still is, secured no doubt in many cases at the cost of unlimited hours of labour, and also of female and child labour, with its detrimental effects upon physical health and a healthy tone of home-life. In this way progress and civilization were accompanied by poverty and a

Antagonism
in the
greed of
gain and its
results.

The cost
at which
cheapness
of com-
modities is
secured.

degree of mental as well as moral and spiritual destitution simply appalling. Then the introduction of costly machinery required a large margin of profit; and this could be secured only by paying low wages. The standard of living was thus lowered; and the result was, on the one hand, often a dulled sense of duty in the master, bent on commercial success; on the other, "deadness and debasement of the mass" of workers, with little hope of rising out of this sordid condition. Such, undoubtedly, were the immediate results of the "industrial revolution," when noble men, like Lord Shaftesbury, took in hand the work of "social reform," and called for the aid of legislation to protect at least women and children against inhuman rapacity in factories. Nor were there wanting even then humane employers of labour, like David Dale of New Lanark, Samuel Morley, and Sir Titus Salt of Saltaire, who endeavoured to improve the condition of those in their employ. There were factory owners and manufacturers, like those described by Lord Beaconsfield in "Sybil" more than fifty years ago, and by Lord Meath in the *Nineteenth Century* only the other day, in a paper entitled "A Model Factory." There were then, as there are now, men who endeavoured to rescue multitudes of waifs and strays from social wreckage. As social evils developed, efforts were made to remedy them. So now! If bitter cries have risen of late from the

Costly
machinery
and low
wages.

Effects on
masters and
workers.

The work
of social
reformers
and humane
employers.

Efforts to
remedy
social evils.

densely populated districts in towns, the religious world, which first heard the cry has not remained unmindful of its duty to call for a remedy. When public attention was roused, legislation and private philanthropy were not slow in taking measures to provide industrial dwellings and to make provision for sanitary improvements both in town and country. If the desertion of the country districts by the ablest and best agricultural labourers has in the present condition of rural industry proved a dire necessity, the State in establishing a system of general education has recognized the necessity of giving a fair start to those who are compelled to seek employment elsewhere.

Legislative
and philan-
thropic
action.

State
provision
of general
education.

Efforts
to aid
emigration.

The
share of
the many
in the
accumulated
wealth of
the last half
century.

Public and private efforts to aid emigration have not been wanting to find a fair field for surplus population in countries where a virgin soil waits to be cultivated. If it be true that the vast growth of modern industry has "piled up the wealth of the few," statisticians of no mean order also tell us that for the last half century the share of the many in the accumulated wealth has not been inconsiderable. It may be—and we are inclined to think so—that the socialist's *minimum* and the statistician's *maximum* assigned thus to the labouring class may be considerably exaggerated. Still, a great improvement has taken place in their position during the period under consideration. So that without being too optimistic in our own view, we

yet cannot accept the pessimist view of Socialists and their sympathizers without considerable reserve. What is still more important is the process of enlightenment both among the masters and the men, going hand in hand with material progress and producing a recognition of the rights of humanity in the former, with a quickened sense of responsibility in the latter, and in both a clearer sense of mutual obligations, with a fuller recognition of the fact that their interests are the same, whilst class antagonism has become less intense. Of this the creation of conciliation and arbitration boards for the settling of disputes is a hopeful sign. Thus a higher sense of social duty and a higher social ideal have sprung up in all ranks, side by side with the rise of modern industry, and with them what we may call the Christian sense of solidarity has been rehabilitated. Many of the evil consequences of social disintegration in the past have been mainly due to the breaking up of religious bonds and the weakened power of Christian sympathy and charity, and the growth of scepticism among all classes during this period of material advancement. But whilst the historical retrospect of Socialists is far from being correct, the service which they may render to society in calling attention to existing imperfections may yet be of great value in producing serious self-examination as to their spiritual causes, with a view to their removal

Growing enlightenment
of masters
and men.

Boards of
conciliation
and
arbitration

Enhanced
sense of
social duty.

The
services
Socialists
may render.

—in short, to show how far we still fall short of the Christian ideal.

2. *Socialistic View of the Capitalistic Era.*

Socialist condemnation of profit and loss system.

The present system said to rob labour in order to enrich capital.

The explanation given by Socialists.

THIS, in the next place, leads to an examination of Socialistic criticism concerning the existing order of things, in its lurid picture of the “Capitalistic Era” in which we live. Here we have no less than a complete condemnation of the Profit and Wages system, and the system of competition generally of which they form a part. The present economic system, it is said, under guise of being a process of exchange of mutual services between capital and labour, robs the latter to enrich the former. How this is effected Socialists explain in their doctrine of *surplus-value*, the “mother-idea” of their negative criticism. The intrinsic value of a thing really depends on the amount of work spent on it, but the economic value of a thing is the price it will fetch in the market, i.e., its exchange value. Now, labour itself is sold and bought like any other commodity in the market; and hence the labourer who has nothing else to sell and exchange but his power to work, must take what that will fetch, less or more, according to the market price of labour. In this way he never gets the full amount of what his work is worth. The rest is surplus value, which is pocketed by his employer, the purchaser of his services. Thus, in the words of an

English Socialist of a former generation, “the labour of the poor represents the gold-mines of the rich.” The current rate of wages according to the “*brazen law*,” acknowledged by orthodox economists like Ricardo, never permits wages to rise above the level of keeping body and soul together. The rest is profit. The accumulated amount of “fleecings” thus obtained by “nibbling and cribbing” becomes the capitalist’s property: in fact, capital is nothing else but the labourers’ blood and sinews boiled down into a jelly; it is “accumulated labour” appropriated by the employer of labour. True, nature provides the raw material, but then nature works gratuitously. Therefore it is human labour which gives the various articles their real value. Value is, therefore, defined as

“the quantity of common labour, measured by time, which on an average is requisite to produce a given commodity by means of implements generally used,”

(the implements themselves being “coagulated,” or the stored-up work of past generations.) Since then, in the words of the official programme of the Social Democracy in Germany,

“‘Labour is the source of wealth and all culture ; and as in general productive labour is only possible through society, to society belongs the aggregate production of labour.’ But ‘in the present state of society the means of labour are a monopoly of the capitalist class ; the dependence of the labouring class in consequence thereof is the cause of misery and slavery in every form. . . . Starting from these principles, the Socialistic labour party of Germany strives after the free state, and a society

The
operation of
“the brazen
law.”

Socialist
view of
capital.

The
programme
of Social
Democracy
in Germany.

founded on Socialistic principles, the destruction of the brazen law of wages by means of abolishing the existing wages system, the removal of spoliation in every form, and of social and political inequality of whatever kind.’’

This process, in the view of scientific socialists, will emerge in the course of natural development, and all they can do is simply to wait upon the course of events. They insist that the present capitalistic system is sure to break down under its own weight; it implies a competitive struggle among the employers themselves, a struggle in which the smaller are crushed under the power of bigger establishments, “Mammoth Companies” and “Bonanza Farms,” swallowing up the smaller capitalists and agriculturists, as Aaron’s rod did those of the magicians.

The expected breakdown of the capitalist system.

The approach of the social crisis.

It is added that when all the middle rounds of the social ladder have been torn out, the social crisis will be reached. It is now being hastened on by the eagerness of enterprising competitors to undersell each other and to overwork their machinery, in plan-less over-production, which gluts the market and produces periodic economic crises, spreading misery and discontent among vast multitudes, who execrate the authors of the misery in times of bad trade, and watch with envy the accumulation of wealth produced by their labour in times of prosperity. The moment is coming when they will bear it no longer. Society is doomed to die of congestion. Plutocracy, like

Society said to be doomed to die of congestion.

Aristocracy, as a transitional stage in social evolution, must make room for triumphant Democracy in economics, as it has done already in politics.

"The social organism, like a harmoniously-developed individual, has three stages of growth: implicit obedience, restless self-assertion, and, finally, intelligent co-operation. The war between capital and labour will cease. Capital will no longer be the *tyrant* of labour, but, as true national wealth, its invaluable *handmaid*. The steward of that national wealth will be the *State*, which has, as we shall now see, a title to all capital paramount to that of either capitalists or labourers."¹

Stages of
growth in
the social or-
ganisation.

Here, then, we have capital punishment pronounced against society under King Capital, or rather the disintegration and dissolution of modern society predicted as the natural result of social injustice. It is a severe charge brought against the existing social order from a moral and religious point of view, and a prognostic sad to contemplate if true. We have arrived here at the kernel of the social question. But have we here a true, or partially true, account of the rise, progress, and decline of the present system of industry, and is there real danger of the social catastrophe thus adumbrated?

The
predicted
dissolution
of modern
society.

Let us be quite fair to our opponents! It may be admitted that many evils accompanying our modern civilization, such, e.g., as the "sweating system," which has formed the subject of a careful Parliamentary inquiry, and "starvation diseases,"

Admitted
evils—
The
sweating
system.

¹ *Co-operative Commonwealth*, pp. 56, 57.

Underpaid labour.

to which Blue Books of a former commission of inquiry refer as the result of underpaid labour in town and country, as well as the “stupefying influences of the division of labour in factories,” acknowledged in the lately published Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops,¹ are matters for sad contemplation to Christian people, and utterly inconsistent with the humanitarian principles laid down in the New Testament.

Profit mongering.

Judged by this standard, “profit-mongering,” which disregards the principle that “the labourer is worthy of his hire,” stands condemned. The Old Testament is severe against “those who oppress the hireling.”

The Old Testament condemns the oppression of the hireling.

A system which reduces human beings to mere tools, “upon whom,” in the words of the Inspector’s Report, “a commercial value is set only in proportion to the multitudes of them who are compelled to accept whatever is offered,” is not in accordance with the spirit of Christianity, which invests with equal dignity every soul redeemed by Christ.

The treatment of human beings as mere tools opposed to the spirit of Christianity.

The hot pursuit of gain for its own sake is discountenanced, and the covetous acquisitiveness and a disregard of higher interests find their condemnation in such expressions as these: “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul (a life

The pursuit of gain for its own sake condemned by the Gospel.

¹ (See pp. 103–4): “It is evident that the *fierceness* of competition and the craze for cheapness have quite transformed our methods of manufacturing.”

—higher life of the soul), or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ! ”¹ And

“ what true friend of the labouring multitude can fail to be grateful to Christ for having raised His voice so loudly against the greed of gold which has so often proved a double curse—a curse to them from whose sinews the gold has been wrung, and a curse to them whom it has bloated and pampered ? ”²

At the same time it has to be remembered in all fairness that what may be true of some is very far from true concerning all capitalists.

All
capitalists
not greedy
of gain.

“ Any given accumulation of commercial wealth may be indicative, on the one hand,” says Mr. Ruskin, “ of faithful industries, progressive energies, and productive ingenuities ; or, on the other, it may be indicative of moral luxury, merciless tyranny, ruinous chicane.”

Socialists seem to include all under the latter category in their sweeping condemnation ; whilst there are many who are guided by—and many more who strive at least to be guided by—the Christian maxim to do unto all as we would be done by. Moreover, sufficient importance is not attached in such Socialistic criticism to the superior value of the directing mind in relation to human labour and its due share.

Indiscrimin-
ate Socialist
condemna-
tion of
capitalists.

Socialists omit to give weight to the consideration that the whole race of enterprising capitalists, past and present, who have brought about the higher organization of labour of the present day, with all its faults, have rendered some service to

The
superior
value of the
directing
mind over-
looked by
Socialists.

The
service of
capitalists to
Humanity.

¹ Mark viii. 36, 37.

² *Present Day Tract No. 7, “Christianity and Secularism,”* by Rev. W. G. Blaikie, p. 22.

Humanity, and that *their* services, too, demand recognition, since the actual resources of society must be attributed, in part at least, to their skill, foresight, and energy ; and that there is some force in the statement, though it admits of ludicrous exaggeration, that the possession of capitalized property is the result and reward of frugality. Nor should it be forgotten that our present immunity from the dire effects of epidemics, of dearth and famine, so common in past ages, must be credited to the perfected system of commercialism, with its means of early information and rapid inter-communication, by which the want of one locality can be supplied with the superfluities of another without delay. Moreover, if ours be an era of economic strife, it is owing to the influence of commerce and industry, that on the whole, and through their influence, its tendency has been in favour of political peace ; whilst the arts of peace have been vastly instrumental in spreading comfort and ease among wider circles than formerly, and also in ministering to the higher culture of all in providing science and literature for the million. Much of this has been brought about by the spirit of competition itself, stimulating healthy exertion and emulation in the place of dulness and mediocrity. In connection with the charge that competitive commercialism finds its moral and spiritual counterpart in modern

Benefits
derived from
the perfected
system of
com-
mercialism.

Commerce
and
industry
favourable
to peace.

Healthful
influence
of the
spirit of
competition.

Protestantism—and K. Marx himself attributes to the influence of Luther and the Reformation the growth of individualism and private enterprise—the source of all our modern woes,—it is our duty in the interests of reformed Christianity to remind those who make this charge, that to the same source we also owe the blessing of civic and religious liberty. Among such commercial communities and in Protestant countries generally, there has been a strong current in favour of legislation for the people, an association of “Legislative Social Reform” having been organized quite lately in this country, the object of which cannot be stated better than in the resolution moved by the late Lord Mount Temple:—

“That in the opinion of this meeting, composed exclusively of members of both Houses of Parliament, it is expedient in the interests of the great body of the people, that a parliamentary organization be formed, irrespective of political party, to be called the Parliamentary Social Reform Committee, and that those present now form themselves into such an organization.”¹

Current in
favour of
legislation
for the
people.

Association
for
Legislative
Social
Reform.

Recent legislative measures and Presidential messages in the United States breathe the same spirit. What the law leaves unremedied, private philanthropy endeavours to heal. Innumerable social institutions rise up on every side for the elevation of those who are in danger of being crushed under the wheels of progress, or, who by reason of physical or mental defects are left behind in the race of life. It is untrue that under the

Recent
legislation
in the
United
States.

All bargains
under free
contract not
selfish.

¹ *The Mail*, Republication of the *Times*, 18th May, 1888.

ægis of free contract, all bargains are arranged on purely selfish principles, or that most employers, if not all, take an undue advantage of the unprotected condition of their dependents, or that the latter with their present legal powers of combination are left entirely at the mercy of their employers. The tone of Trades Unions and the infrequency of strikes are signs of better relations, and the adoption of more pacific means of settling differences on equal terms which considerably diminish the virulence of class conflicts without sacrificing the interests of labour.

Christian sympathy
modifies
selfish propensities.

Admitted evils of
egoism, etc.

Thus the selfish propensities of a professedly individualistic age are being modified by the play of Christian sympathy, to which the first great expositor of the modern industrial system, Adam Smith, the author of the "Wealth of Nations," showed the way in his "Theory of Moral Sentiments." We have no intention to gloss over, on the contrary, we deplore, the excesses of egoism and the unhealthy excrescences of the present system, the demoralizing effects of factory work, the dulling influences of monotonous drudgery, the vulgarizing tendencies of a life destitute of brightness and variety, the brutalizing effects of drink and low indulgences, rushed at, in the eagerness for excitement and in the absence of higher tastes, in minds too uncultivated for more humanizing enjoyments; above all, we deplore the debasing

effects on the spiritual faculties, which debar thousands from relishing divine things because the heart has been hardened as the flint in the wretched struggle for mere existence. These we cannot pass by, like the Priest and Levite in the parable. Nor can we forget that the evils connected with a vast accumulation of private property have been pointed out long before this by the early Fathers and the later Reformers of the Christian church. Zwingle deplores the fact that “the free gift of God has become private property,” but he at the same time tells the would-be despoilers of private property how it is written: “Thou shalt not covet!” “The exploitation of man by man,” *i.e.*, the unprincipled acquisition of wealth at the expense of other men’s labours is wrong. Whilst to share our substance with others, after the example of the early Christians, who “had all things in common,” and in imitation of Christ’s self-sacrificing love, is an ideal it is well never to lose sight of. But it is not by the confiscation of wealth, or a compulsory change of the social order that the evils of the present state of things can be remedied. Selfish propensities cannot be curbed and unselfish impulses cannot be created by a change of social forms and governmental direction. They require, on the contrary, a complete inner change. Ananias and Sapphira were by their disposition unfit for such high effort of self-sacrificing enthusiasm as that of

Evils
of vast ac-
cumulation
pointed
out by
Fathers and
Reformers.

Zwingle’s
warning.

Confiscation
and
compulsory
changes no
remedy.

An inward
change
needed.

the early Christians. Are modern socialist leaders and the masses who follow their teachings, steeped as they are in materialism, morally and mentally fitted for a “well-ordered social system,” in which such qualities and such a standard of altruistic self-effacement is presupposed? What is the nature of this new “Co-operative Commonwealth,” which is to displace the present system, and of what sort are the measures and the men by whom it is to be inaugurated? How does it compare by the side of the Christian Commonwealth as we see it dimly foreshadowed in the pages of the New Testament?

3. The Co-operative Commonwealth compared with the Christian Commonwealth.

In answer to the question : “What is the Co-operative Commonwealth?” Mr. Gronlund replies, p. 77 :—

“Extend in your mind division of labour and other factors that increase the productivity of labour, to *all* human pursuits as far as can be ; imagine manufactures, traffic and commerce, conducted on the grandest possible scale and in the most effective manner ; add to division of labour its complement—CONCERT ; introduce adjustment where now there is anarchy ; add that central regulative system which Spencer says distinguishes all highly organized structures, and which supplies ‘each organ with blood in proportion to the work it does ;’ and —behold the CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH !

“The Co-operative Commonwealth, then, is that future social order—the natural heir of the present one—in which all important instruments of production shall be taken under collective control ; in which the citizens shall be consciously public functionaries ; and in which their labours shall be rewarded according to results.”

The nature
of the
Co-operative
Common-
wealth.

Gronlund’s
account of
the Co-
operative
Common-
wealth.

In this manner, we are told, the power of acquiring individual ownership would not be taken away; the rights of property, on the contrary, would rest "on an unimpeachable basis," though no one may use it "as an instrument of fleecing his fellow-citizens." Work would be carried on systematically, scientific statistics being used to prevent planless production. Risks would thus be minimized on account of the "vast power over the conditions of demand and supply of labour," and thus the Commonwealth would be able to "preserve economic equilibrium." The Universal Providers and Co-operative Associations of to-day would serve as working models of this new Co-operative Commonwealth, in which trade and traffic, manufactures and agricultural industry could be carried on on a general plan. Here "*there will be a demand for the labour of every citizen,*"¹ not only manual labour, for

"brain work will have its due weight, the new Commonwealth will not be a state of mechanics."

All talents, in short, will find room here, and all aptitudes their full development, whilst three or four hours daily will suffice, if all put their hand to it, to do the work of society. Thus there will be ample leisure, which is the mother of culture, for all; in fine

"the Co-operative Commonwealth will conduce to social wel-

Individual ownership
not to be
taken away.

Work to be
carried on
systemati-
cally.

Economic
equilibrium
to be
preserved.

Trade and
traffic, etc.,
to be carried
on upon a
general
plan.

All talents
to find room

Leisure
for all.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 86, et seq.

fare by securing to all its citizens abundance, by furnishing them leisure, and by enabling them to follow their natural bent. Work, no longer a tribute to physical necessity, will be a glad performance of social office. It will for the first time in human history establish harmony between personal egoism and the public welfare, simply by distributing the forces of the social organism in accordance with its real needs.”¹

The new
social order
to be
permanent.

And this social order is regarded as permanent.

“It will endure as long as society itself, for no higher evolution is thinkable, except organized humanity, and that is but social co-operation extended to the whole human race.”

We are assured that all this is the very reverse of Utopian, and we could wish that it were so. Such a well-adjusted social mechanism in which all would work together in concert, where the social anarchy produced by ill-regulated self-seeking would be replaced by united action on a perfect plan and for the good of all, would closely resemble the Christian Commonwealth, dreamed of in the religious Utopias of all ages. But whilst it would be possible to realize such a state wherein all are influenced by the one prevailing principle of Christian love, and whilst a nearer approach to that “rest which remaineth for the people of God,” in this world living at high pressure, is a consummation much to be desired, we may ask:

Is there any probability that all this could be brought about in a society where the leading principles of Christianity would be avowedly ignored, and where human passions would no longer be restrained by its Divine discipline? Even supposing

Such
a state
possible
were all
influenced
by Christian
love.

Impractic-
able in a
society
where the
principles of
Christianity
would be
ignored.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

for argument's sake that the social equilibrium were to be restored by the mechanical contrivances of state-craft, as here suggested by Socialists, given the establishment of such a new social order—it is useless to show its impracticability—suppose all those engaged in private employment in the existing system of industry to be converted into public functionaries appointed by the people, and subjection were put an end to by the introduction of a Labour Department, all being subordinate to self-made laws, administered by officials selected from among the people, and removable at the people's pleasure, how long could all this last whilst human beings remain what they are? What guarantees are there that the rulers of superior ability and integrity would be always forthcoming, and that those ruled by them would not grow restive under the *régime*? Would everything continue to fit in this "fittest type of economic structure" for all times to come?

The germ of it, we are told, already exists in the constitution of Trades Unions and Friendly Societies on the one hand, and in that of Joint Stock Companies—everywhere on the increase—and Trade Co-operations on the other. All that is required is sufficient time for further development and adaptation in order to the entire reorganization of society in the manner proposed. Modern Socialists do not pretend to be the architects of the

Could
not last
while
human
beings
remain as
they are.

How it is to
be brought
about.

The
relation
of the
established
order to the
future Com-
monwealth.

new social edifice—in fact, they say society is not an edifice at all requiring architectural skill, but a living and growing organism, growing out of existing conditions, and so, the future Co-operative Commonwealth bears to the established order the same relation that the full-blown flower bears to the green bud,¹ complete efflorescence, consisting of a perfectly organised society under a popular bureaucracy in the people's state, as the "arbiter of administration." The State now, as far as industry is concerned, is condemned to "Administrative Nihilism;" not so in that which is to be. In it the laws will be readily obeyed, because all authority emanates from the people, all will be judged by their peers, every man in "a trial by his comrades." Laws detrimental to the general welfare are abolished by common consent, members of the executive violating the trust placed in them will be removed from office, whereas citizens who may prove insubordinate or dangerous to the Commonwealth will be coerced into obedience, the government being carried on by trusted and tried leaders—for, "Democracy means administration by the competent."²

Definition of Democracy.

The functionaries of the Commonwealth.

All the functionaries of the Commonwealth are not only fitted out in an eminent degree with moral and mental aptitudes for their important task, but it is also presumed that "their

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

² *Ibid.*, p. 123.

interests will always coincide with their duties." From the most distinguished for honesty, skill, and public spirit the appointments are made, and no difficulty is anticipated here, for

"in every sphere of activity the greatest ability will gravitate towards positions of influence, *and the subordinates will be aware of the fact.*"¹

The great criterion will be efficiency.

The criterion of efficiency.

If it be asked how can an order of officers so efficient always be secured, will there be error of choice at any time, and will the best always be willing to serve? We are told that the new state of society as such will of itself produce a new morality.

The rise of a new morality.

"It is not our morality or want of morality that makes our economic relations what they are, but our economic system that makes our morality what it is."²

That is to say, the social organism of the future will be perfect because its officers are immaculate; and they will perform their functions in a perfect manner, because a perfect system is sure to evolve perfect functionaries. This is reasoning in a vicious circle, and rests on the false assumption of the innate perfection of human nature. Or, rather, it assumes the perfection of the organizers as the basis of the perfect organism which is to remove all imperfections. What it really amounts to is this, that the leaders of the masses would govern the world much better than the chosen

Perfect officers and perfect organism.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

² *Ibid.*, p. 165.

men of the classes, that the former are more perfect than the latter, that in the last instance the people's voice is infallible.

Legislation
by *ad re-
ferendum.*

After the recent action of the Government of Switzerland in expelling some of their own members, Socialists will no longer maintain this infallibility of legislation by an appeal *ad referendum*, which the Co-operative Commonwealth was to borrow, when duly constituted, from the Helvetian Republic.

Mr. Neale's
appeal to
the
Dewsbury
Co-operative
Congress.

The recent debate in the Co-operative Congress held in Dewsbury on the question of giving the productive worker his full share in the profits of the Distributive Societies, in the course of which Mr. Holyoake compared the inequitable conduct of some co-operative bodies in this respect to that of Judas Iscariot, for they "sell the workman to the life-long crucifixion of unrequited labour for three-eights of a penny;" whilst Mr. Neale, the patriarchal President of the Congress, thought it his duty to entreat all "to rise from a disguise for self-interest into a principle of social duty," in their application of the Co-operative principle, will have raised doubts in many minds whether the mere institution of a Co-operative Commonwealth would expel egoism from society.

The officers
of Trades'
Unions
criticised
by their
followers.

Nor have the officers of Trades Unions in Great Britain and the heads of labour movements in America always met with favourable criticism among the rank and file of their followers. On

the contrary, they are regarded with considerable suspicion and dislike by the Socialists on both sides of the Atlantic, and spoken of with hatred as a new Aristocracy of Labour. And what shall we say of internal dissensions and mutual recriminations of Socialists everywhere, unable as they are even at this present moment, in their position as a minority, in some countries a persecuted minority, to keep the peace among themselves? Their "sectarian and schismatic tendency" is complained of by a recent writer in *To-Day*, the cultured organ of Socialism in this country. Will a mere change of forms and name produce the great moral change anticipated by Socialism? Will there be no abuse of power, no lack of discretion and discernment in the new rulers, no errors in judgment or abuse of the power of veto and other popular checks to misrule? Is there not some danger of what Mr. Herbert Spencer calls "the coming slavery" in this people's State, and a still greater danger to its own stability in the mode of its proposed government? Those whom the people delight to honour are not always the best. Since the days of Aristides those most distinguished for virtue and wisdom are apt at times to incur popular displeasure. "Capacities," i.e., the able men among the Socialist bodies, are even now alluded to with scorn in some of the organs of Social Democracy. If the old *régime* has proved

Dissensions
and mutual
recrimina-
tions among
Socialists.

Complaints
of the
Socialist
organ
To-Day.

Danger
of "the
coming
slavery in
the people's
State."

"Capacities
already
derided
among
Socialist
bodies.

at times oppressive, what guarantee have we that the new will be better, that it may not end in a worse kind of despotism ?

The over-
estimate of
individual
liberty no
reason for
parting with
liberty.

The
new rules
might
introduce
greater evils
than the
present
ones.

The
let-alone
policy of
the modern
state once
the cry for
the
deliverance
of labour.

Personal in-
dependence
and social
co-ordina-
tion supple-
mentary.

The value of individual liberty, as compared with that of social union, may have been overestimated for the last hundred years ; but this is no reason why the liberty obtained after so many struggles should be bargained away too hastily for greater social equality. However desirable it may be to secure this as a means of effecting a greater unification of society, it is bought too dearly at the price of lost liberty. Great as are the evils of social warfare and the strife of private interests, unless curbed in some measure by public authority, the arbitrary rules of the majority in the Co-operative Commonwealth, might produce worse than these. To repress individual by social force might prove more tyrannical than autocratic government in the past. *Laissez-faire, laissez-aller*, the let-alone policy of the State in modern society, so obnoxious to Socialists, was itself a cry for the deliverance of labour from overmuch governmental interference on the part of philanthropic men who saw the evil of the *ancien régime* before the French Revolution. It is found now that Individualism, uncontrolled in its centrifugal tendencies is bad ; but Socialism in its centripetal tendencies might be worse. Personal independence and social co-ordination have each their relative value, they are

supplementary to, not substitutes of, each other. In the same way the principle of co-operation, alone and without competition as a stimulus to progress, is insufficient. Avarice and greed are evils inseparable from competition, but lethargy and indolence would follow close on the heels of its disappearance as a motor of energy and industry, and therefore Socialism allows a certain degree of inequality and rivalry in the new social order. So, too, the importance of concerted action, with a more widely diffused spirit of fraternal affection, may co-exist with perfect freedom secured to the individual. As Professor Caird, speaking of the one-sided and misleading abstractions of Individualism and Socialism, has well put it :

“ Society is not an aggregate of independent units, not a mechanical whole in which difference is suppressed, but, in the true sense of the word, an organism in which the unity of the whole is built on the relatively independent life of every part ; and the independent life of every part nourishes and maintains itself through its connection with the unity of the whole body.”

Socialists err in both directions, both as regards the whole and the parts. Starting as they do from the principle of the “ inherent goodness of human nature,”¹ and the self-rectifying powers inherent in human society, they simply require the changes necessary in the social environment and in the education of the social unit to produce general social happiness. All men are by nature honest, millionaires excepted ; but even they are criminals

Co-operation
insufficient
without
competition.

Concerted
action
consistent
with
individual
freedom.

The root-
error of
Socialists.

¹ Gronlund, *Co-operative Commonwealth*, p. 160.

only because society is what it is. Change the system, and there will be none of them, for

“‘Crime, in all its forms, is an evidence of the neglected responsibilities of society.’ ‘The New Commonwealth will make it man’s interest to be honest, because under it the interests of each will be identical with the interests of society.’”

Men not guided by enlightened self-interest but by inclination.

Men do not, however, commonly follow an enlightened view of their own interest. Most people are determined in their course of action by their inclinations, by what they like.

The Socialist idea that a change of system will produce general social happiness is no more true than the following and still more startling assertion that “Unity of belief is the normal condition of the human intellect; it is just as natural for healthy men to think and believe alike as it is for healthy men to see alike.”

Hence, it is argued, on such premises as these, that to bring up all alike in the same right way, will remove all disagreements. Even unanimity in matters of religion may be expected to prevail in the New Commonwealth,

“since the religion of a nation is the outcome of its highest intelligence in its most solemn moments;”

therefore the “New Faith” of this new Society, its “religion of the future,” will be “a form of belief in a will of the Universe,” and

“Religion may thus be elevated from a narrow personal relation between the individual and his Maker into a social relation between humanity and its destiny.”¹

Religious unanimity expected in the New Commonwealth.

The Socialist idea of religion in the future.

¹ Gronlund, *Co-operative Commonwealth*, ch. xii., pp. 164–178. The views of Socialists on this point vary considerably. But we

Here Socialism and Christianity are at issue. The theory of human perfection is not in accordance with the teaching of Christ, and is contradicted by the facts of universal human experience. The Gospel of Christ puts the reformation of the individual through the regeneration of the heart first, and from it in the next place it anticipates the reformation of society. It believes in the educative power through the divinely-appointed means of governors and tutors during the early dispensation of the law, as the schoolmaster, leading to Christ and the ministry of the Holy Ghost during the present dispensation. From it it expects the ripening of those fruits of the Spirit, "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering," and such like, which would go far to restore peace in society, in preventing human beings from following their unsocial tendencies. Christianity in the past has proved its power thus to "raise man organically." In the same way, since the salt has not lost its savour, it is destined as an organizing force to re-collect the members of our "atomized" or "pulverized" society by the Divine influence of Him who said: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." In such passages as 1 Cor. xii. 12, et seq., we have a type of social union which cannot be surpassed in any ideal picture of human association,

The regeneration and reformation of the individual first according to the Gospel.

The proved power of Christianity to raise man.

The New Testament type of social union.

quote from this work because it contains the authorized expression of Anglo-Saxon Socialism.

where "all the members of the body, being many, are one body ;" . . and this on the ground that "ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof." And this spiritual organism lives and grows in its organic union with the head, the source of Divine life in each and all. "Even Christ ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in *due* measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."¹

Christian fellowship
the highest conceivable ideal of a perfect society.

Socialist schemes have only succeeded when inaugurated by Christian sects.

A higher ideal of a perfect society than that of Christian fellowship where all the members are kept together by common aims, common activities, and common interests, controlled by one common Divine rule of faith and love cannot be conceived. We make bold to say that consciously or unconsciously it has been the ideal before the mind of all world-improvers and framers of social Utopias since the Christian era. And it is a remarkable fact that of those efforts at practically applying Socialistic schemes which have been made from time to time on the most favourable soil of the United States, such only have succeeded which were inaugurated by the Christian sects ; whilst the Phalansteries, Fourierist, and Cabetist settlements, and similar experiments of the same period, without the aid of Christian enthusiasm,

¹ Eph. iv. 16, R.V.

have miserably failed. In fact, social improvement and social progress have invariably followed the spread of Christianity. Sir W. Wilson Hunter, speaking of the social influences of Christianity in India at a distinguished meeting of the Society of Arts, is reported to have uttered these words:

“Christianity holds out advantages of *social organization* not offered by *Hinduism* and *Islam*. It provides for the education and moral supervision of its people with a pastoral care which Islam, destitute of a regular priesthood, does not pretend to. It receives the new members into its body with a cordiality and completeness to which Hinduism is a stranger. The backward races can only creep within the outskirts of Hinduism as low castes at the very bottom of the social edifice. . . . Christianity also raises the position of woman to a degree unknown to Hinduism and Islam.”¹

Social improvement has always followed the spread of Christianity.

Sir William Hunter's testimony.

In a similar way a French layman, M. Desgrand, writing on the influence of religion on the economic development of nations, points out the superiority of Christianity as compared with such religious systems as Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, and Mohammedanism, where indolence, apathy, and stagnation follow in the wake of religious quietism and fatalism. He gives a telling instance of this in the comparative development of the Kurds and the Armenians, both living in the same natural environment and subject to the same Turkish rule; the one under the influence of the Mohammedan, the other under that of the Christian religion; the former never getting beyond the state of civilization

Superiority of Christianity to Buddhism, Confucianism, etc.

Contrast between the Kurds and Armenians.

¹ *Times*, February 25th, 1888.

peculiar to a pastoral people, the latter under the propelling influences of a more stimulating faith, not only rendering the soil fertile by agriculture, but peopling large cities enriched by commerce and industry. But what is more to the point, and nearer home, the same writer compares the influence of Christianity with that of mere Humanitarian philanthropy in modern times and in the most civilized societies in Europe, to show how in the flourishing industries, *e.g.*, of Alsace under Christian employers, dealing with their workpeople on distinctly Christian principle, perfect harmony prevails, because Christian charity banishes *le moi haïssable* (the hateful egoism), the source of so much envy and strife; whilst in the Industries of Southern France—and, as the Vice-President of the Society of Primary Instruction of the Rhone Department and of the National Society of Education for Lyons, he speaks here with authority—the relations of labour and capital

The
unhappy
effects
of the
alliance
of Atheism
with
Anarchy.

The
union of
Christianity
with philan-
thropy
produces
social
harmony.

are most unsatisfactory. He accounts for it by attributing this unhappy state of things to the alliance of Atheism with Anarchy, which, in this locality as elsewhere, is the cause of social disintegration; whilst the union of Christianity with true philanthropy produces social harmony. This leads us, in conclusion, to speak of the way in which Christianity may and must become a spiritual force, not only in the individual, but in society.

Comparative
influence of
Christianity
and Human-
itarian
philosophy.

VI.

CHRISTIANITY AS A SPIRITUAL FORCE IN SOCIETY.

CHRISTIANITY, which, as a remedial system, provides for the putting away of sin by the death of Christ, and the renewal of the nature by the power of the Holy Spirit, can also exorcise the demon of egotism and discontent by means of teaching the passive virtues of resignation and self-denial, and so do much towards the pacification of society. As a reformatory power, and by means of enforcing the active virtues of diligence, justice, and veracity, it may transform entirely the character and habits of all classes in society. Thus, in promoting simplicity and frugality of living and the conscientious use of talents and possessions, it may repair the moral foundation of the whole social system. In supplying the highest spiritual motives for self-restraint and sobriety of living, as opposed to wasteful indulgence among the luxurious rich and intemperate poor, it can remove innumerable causes of envy and dissatisfaction, and stay the course of social enervation and decay. It reminds the rich that they are stewards who must give an account of the use of the property entrusted to their care. It reminds the poor of the duty of making a right use of the *one* talent entrusted to *their* care, and warns them against the danger of reckless

The power of Christianity to pacify society.

Its reformatory power.

Its power to arrest social decay.

Its admonitions addressed impartially to rich and poor.

indulgence and imprudence. Thus, by encouraging thrift and a conscientious husbanding of means to an end, and the proper use of faculties and powers for the common good, it would raise the level of social morality.

Its view of life as a provisional state.

Moreover, in reminding rich and poor alike that our life here is only a provisional state, where perfection indeed must be aimed at, though we cannot reach it, it may on the one hand inspire noble efforts towards social improvement founded on faith in a social Providence, whilst, on the other, it may be a shield against disappointments founded on false expectation of social perfectibility conceived in a purely materialistic belief in laws of social evolution. Christianity teaches patience under present trials to those who entertain the sure and certain hope of everlasting life, and a firm belief in a final restitution of all things. As of the “poor people” of Lincolnshire, living in “the fellowship of the Gospel,” when expelled the country in times of persecution, so of our labouring poor the historian of the future might then record what was said of them :

“They knew they were pilgrims, and looked not much on these things, but lifted up their eyes to heaven, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits.”¹

The Pilgrim Fathers.

Among this little band of exiles, says Mr. Green, were those who were to become famous at a later time as the Pilgrim Fathers. From which

¹ Green’s *Short History of the English People*, pp. 459, 460.

we may conclude that religious resignation under social disabilities is by no means an hindrance to social progress. On the contrary, what we call progress is mainly owing to the force of Individualism chastened by Christianity.

Referring to the consolations of religion, it has been said that its exhortations to patience are like "pills to cure social earthquakes," or "orthodox doses of chloroform." But this Christian view of things is after all the most philosophic; and a state of mind superior to that of discontented irritation produced in minds misled by abstractions like the following, that "all men are born equal," from which the principle is deduced that all have equal rights to an equal share in the earth's produce. No doubt the idea of equality in the eyes of God and in the eyes of the law is Christian. God is no respecter of persons. And the historian, referring to the "Puritan discipline" in the work quoted above, speaks of "the new conception of social equality" as one of the solid gains of the social revolution produced in this country by the Puritans.

"Their common call, their common brotherhood in Christ, annihilated in the mind of the Puritans that overpowering sense of social distinctions which characterized the age of Elizabeth. The meanest peasant felt himself ennobled as a child of God. The proudest noble recognized a spiritual equality in the poorest 'saint.'"¹

Religious
resignation
no hindrance
to social
progress.

The
Christian
view of
things the
most philo-
sophic.

The
Christian
idea of
equality.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 451.

The Christian doctrine of equality ideal.

How it is to be realized.

Moral re-invigoration needful.

Socialist view of the relation of Egoism to Socialism.

Such is the doctrine of Christian equality contained in the New Testament. Yet it is an ideal rather than an actual equality. To the latter there are natural limitations, since all men differ from their birth in physical, mental, and moral faculties and powers, which tend to inequality, and these even Socialists do not attempt to remove altogether. Morally all are equal, in other respects they are not so. But Christianity calls upon the strong to come to the rescue of the weak, those who have superfluous wealth to share it with the needy, as St. Paul exhorts the Corinthian Church, "*that there may be equality.*"²

Does Socialism aim higher than this? But in order to attain to this, a re-invigoration of the moral constitution is required which the leverage power of Christianity alone can bring about. It requires "a nicer sense of justice," and a further "development in the ideal man" than the present moral level presents to our minds, a readiness of self-surrender and a sacrifice of private interests which Socialists are not yet quite prepared for. In one of the most recent utterances of the official organ of American Socialists we read the following sentence on the relation of Egoism to Socialism:

"Egoism will not, therefore, be removed out of the world, but becomes the most noble of rivalries of all against all, in which each individual endeavours to surpass the rest in the

¹ 2 Cor. viii. 13-15.

care for the general welfare, because *exactly in this way HE HELPS TO FURTHER HIS OWN INTEREST.*”

A more noble spirit of self-sacrificing self-effacement breathes through those words which have so often called forth the enthusiasm of men : “For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that One died for all, therefore all died ; and He died for all, that they which live *should no longer live unto themselves*, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again.”¹

The Christian idea of self-sacrifice.

VII.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

THIS opens out a new view of the functions of the Christian minister in his mediatorial office as the peacemaker between rich and poor. His may often appear to be the impossible task of “reconciling the irreconcilable ;” but it is nevertheless his duty as far as possible to lessen the tension of social passion and to avert some of the threatening evils of class hatred founded on mutual suspicion and clashing interests. by inculcating the principle of Christian sympathy, which, as has been well said, is the common root of justice and beneficence. His ought to be the attitude of benevolent neutrality towards both classes, as his position often is that of inter-

The Christian minister a peace-maker.

His proper attitude towards the rich and poor.

¹ 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, R.V.

mediary between rich and poor, employers and employed. He is, or ought to be, the faithful exponent of brotherly love. For it is selfishness which paralyses the nobler activities of man, whilst a breath of Divine love inspires acts of devoted self-denial. It is this power of moral attraction, by means of which the isolated social units, each pursuing its own end, are drawn towards each other, that the irradiating influences of light and warmth form the centre of the spiritual system, "the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings." In this way Christ has been called "the founder of a new order of humanity." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature."

Self-denial
inspired by
Divine love.

Christ the
founder of a
new order of
humanity.

"The new humanity is full of sympathetic forces which draw men towards each other, and which are bonds of union binding together elements that appear outwardly diverse. . . . The love of Christ, the master passion in all Christlike souls, is a new power in life working towards human brotherhood."¹

"The masses must have something to hate. Direct their hatred to their conditions!" Such and similar exhortations are addressed to their followers by Socialist leaders in the course of the "Educational Campaign." "Love as brethren";² "Let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate: and the rich that he is made low,"³ are the exhortations of the New Testament, which are fitted to calm agitated minds and produce a sense

Exhorta-
tions of
Socialist
leaders.

New
Testament
exhorta-
tions.

¹ The New Social Order, by John Fordyce, M.A., pp. 45, 50, 51, *et passim.*

² 1 Pet. iii. 8. ³ James i. 9,

of Christian solidarity. “One is your Master, all ye are brethren,”¹ is the noblest conception of fraternity.

VIII.

THE IDEA OF CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD.

AGAIN, the idea of Christian brotherhood has well been called the most fertile principle of human confederation on voluntary principles. The stoical idea of human brotherhood could co-exist with a system of slavery, and the slave was the working man of those times. Christian churches wherever founded, from the first were little fraternities of free men on the spiritual principle so happily expressed by Cowper,

The fruitfulness
of the idea
of Christian
brotherhood.

“He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves besides.”

Thus the idea of Christian brotherhood was the cement which crystalized Society in the feudal system, for this system, as M. Guizot shows, was an imperfect attempt of human federation. It was the same principle which led to the formation of trade corporations in the middle ages, under the special protection of the mediæval Church. Abuse of power brought about their dissolution ; but this should not blind us to the fact that they helped in consolidating society, as also they paved the way to later forms of association, free from the trammels of custom and compulsion, though the reactionary efforts of Modern Romanism in its marked sympa-

Christian
brotherhood
the cement
of the
feudal
system and
mediæval
trade cor-
porations

¹ Matt. xxiii. 8.

Christianity
a uniting
principle.

The
initiative in
friendly co-
operation
and
industrial
partnership
due to
Christian
philan-
thropy.

The
unsatisfying
character of
associations
on princi-
ples of mere
self-interest.

thies with Modern Socialism to revert to these effete institutions of the past under ecclesiastical patronage, with a view to social pacification, are an anachronism, an attempt to put new wine into old bottles. But Christianity, as such, still contains this power as a uniting principle in the modern forms of association, such as co-operation and united action of every kind, when there is need for compromise and conciliatory feeling, and a heavy demand is made on mutual trust and toleration. Here it becomes the sacred bond, uniting hearts, the spiritual link strong enough to successfully resist the dissolving force of greedy self-interest. Hence all the first efforts of friendly co-operation and industrial partnership owe the initiative to Christian philanthropy, as the co-operative movement in this country was mainly called into existence by the "*Christian Socialists.*"

"In order that men should live together in the bonds of social union, it is necessary that they should live by faith."

Mere associations for the promotion of common interests, from purely interested motives, cannot satisfy the craving of the covetous, or silence the fears of the jealous: it cannot allay the anger of the contentious, nor avert the misery which follows on idleness and fraud. Industrial confederation is only possible among equals and unequals on the supposition that the associates are inspired by mutual affection and a ready mind to forgive

imperfections; where faults are condoned and injuries forgotten when repented of; where the strong bear the infirmities of the weak, and the weak gather resolution from a sense of duty; where the wavering are made strong with the strength of God, and the wayward subdued by Divine love. Because Christianity alone can suffice for this purpose, leading men in countries where Christianity does not exist, as in Japan, wish to introduce it, anticipating from the introduction of Christian ethics, “*Union of sentiment and feeling, leading to harmonious co-operation.*”¹

The sufficiency of Christianity.

IX.

CHRISTIANITY AND CO-OPERATION.

THE various hindrances to co-operative enterprise—and co-operation is looked upon as the best means of solving the social problem by economists of all schools—such as the difficulty of accumulating capital by small savings, and providing against possible risks, the difficulty of securing perfect equity in assigning the proportion to each according to the capital and labour invested in the enterprise, the dangers arising from bad management, incompetency, or speculation—all these imply a much higher moral level than that as yet reached, a “moral ferment” produced by powerful spiritual convictions. For, as the *Times*, referring to the late

Hindrances to co-operative enterprise.

A higher moral level required.

¹ *Times*, 9th June, 1888.

The demand
of the
higher
form of
co-operation
on human
nature.

Christianity
alone can
secure its
fulfilment.

deliberations of the Co-operative Congress, pointed out at the time, the higher form of co-operation makes a heavy demand on average human nature, its fundamental postulate is a

“Transmutation of self-interest into Altruism, which of itself would suffice to regenerate society.”

With such a postulate, says the *Times*, “we can do miracles.” This miracle of grace Christianity alone can work in the hearts and minds of men, for faith works wonders; therefore, in the words of Professor Eli, a Christian economist of note in the United States:

“If co-operation is to succeed as a practical application of Christianity to business, there must be breathed into it a spirit of Christian consecration.”¹

X.

PRESENT SOCIAL DUTIES AND FUTURE HOPES OF SOCIAL REGENERATION THROUGH THE POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.

The duty of
Christian
society to
the social
residuum.

IN the meantime Christian philanthropy and organized benevolence, legislation of the Christian State for the protection of the weak, educative efforts to produce technical skill and to prevent mental stagnation in the pursuit of dulling occupations, encouragement given to moral and religious training, to cultivate habits of self-government and self-restraint, the promotion of healthy home-

¹ *The Labour Movement in America*, by Professor R. T. Eli, Ph.D., p. 201.

life with innocent and refined enjoyments, to ease the hardness of employments which afford but scanty opportunities for self-culture, opportunities offered for emigration and colonization under the safe conduct of religious guides—such are some of the duties which Christian society owes to the “social residuum.”

The claims of competition as well as co-operation are permanent. There are limits to all human effort for social amelioration. Social as well as individual life must have its share in the discipline of sorrow and suffering. Competition, therefore, which is one of

“the Divine laws of social life and development requires the discipline of the Holy Ghost in the individual and society... so as not to be abused by selfishness, or poisoned by ignorance and folly.”¹

At the same time much may be expected from the moral conquests of Christianity in the society of the future, as it has been conducting it “out of the darkness of mistrust and mutual war into the clear light of mutual faith and loyal fellowship” in the past. Christianity is neither revolutionary nor reactionary, but regenerating and reformatory in its essential character. Containing as it does both the conservative and progressive elements which are necessary to the healthy growth of social life, in which liberty and law, authority and freedom, find their reconciliation, so far from

The permanent claims of competition as well as co-operation.

The moral conquests of Christianity to be expected in the future.

Christianity neither revolutionary nor reactionary, but both conservative and progressive.

¹ F. D. Maurice.

offering any opposition to social development, as some Socialists falsely affirm, it has, on the contrary, throughout the whole course of European history, not only encouraged social reforms, but often given them the first impulse.

The need
of moral
and
spiritual
progress.
Our duty
to promote
social
progress.

The teaching of Christ really contains principles which, if fully carried out, would solve all the problems with which Socialism deals in the best manner, and furnishes the motive, in the work of Divine redemption, and the power in the agency of the Holy Spirit, which are wholly lacking in so-called Socialism.

When the
highest
hopes of
man can be
realized.

Now, as in the past, any approximation to a higher social ideal must depend on moral and spiritual progress. Therefore, whilst it is our duty to promote, as far as in us lies, whatever tends to social improvement, we must not wonder if the onward movement be slow, nor lose courage because at every step in advance a higher ideal still rises before our astonished gaze. Since a perfect social fabric implies a perfect type of humanity, the highest hopes of man cannot be realised “*till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*”¹

¹ Ephes. iv. 13, R.V.

THE AGE AND TRUSTWORTHINESS
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

BY

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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

1. THE Christian view of the Old Testament. 2. Methods of confirming or correcting it. 3. The Old Testament traced back to our Lord's time. 4. What were the Scriptures then in use? 5. These Scriptures traced back to the age of Nehemiah. 6. The weight of Jewish tradition estimated.

7. Characteristics of the Scriptures as they stood circ. 400 B.C. : (a) Many writings. (b) Not all of one class. (c) National. (d) Tribal. (e) Abounding with proper names. (f) Genealogical. (g) Official. (h) Chronological. (i) Topographical.

8. The history contained in these Books partly internal, partly related to outside nations. The method by which each of these may be substantiated.

9. Difficulties to be faced in criticising individual Books. 10. Characteristics of Hebrew. 11. Special characteristics of writers. 12. Grouping of Books. 13. Marks of several hands in single Books. Is the Mosaic law a late compilation? 14. What work remains for the critic? 15. Recapitulation and conclusion, that we are on "safe literary ground in taking the Old Testament as it stands, and in using it as Christ and His Apostles used it."

THE AGE AND TRUSTWORTHINESS
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

INTRODUCTORY.

QUESTIONS relating to the age and compilation of the Books of the Old Testament are occupying many minds at the present day. Critics are freely ventilating certain strange hypotheses, some of which involve a radical change in our conception of the origin and structure of the Books. They profess, indeed, that the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is untouched by their speculations, and that Christianity stands on a footing of its own and leaves free scope for the critic; and we are asked to accept this profession. At the same time no one can doubt that if some of the speculations now current are accepted as true, the claims and authority of the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, would have to be seriously reconsidered; and meantime bewilderment and confusion must be the lot of many anxious minds. It is proposed in these pages to offer a few suggestions which may both guide the

The hypotheses
and pro-
fessions of
critics.

The effect
of some
current
speculations.

student in approaching the “higher criticism” of the Old Testament, and at the same time encourage the devout reader of Holy Scripture to hold fast that which he has received.

1. THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The disposition of the Christian critic.

Many of us are content to take the Old Testament as a whole, and to use it as Christ and His Apostles did. It is true that we are glad to test, confirm, and check this method of holding and using Scripture by other rational and critical methods; but we never lose sight of the high sanction which the Jewish Bible thus possesses. In a word, the Christian critic generally comes to the study of the Old Testament with a bias in its favour, simply because he is a Christian; he is inclined to take it as it stands; he resents destructive criticism on it; and from first to last he would throw the burden of proof on those who propose to disintegrate the Books. This is unavoidable, and it constitutes a reasonable check on hyper-criticism.

2. METHODS OF CONFIRMING OR CORRECTING IT.

How to approach Old Testament criticism.

Having acknowledged this bias, and having accounted for it, we take the Collection which we call the Old Testament into our hands, and ask ourselves how we are to approach its criticism. Shall we begin at the beginning, and trace the

stream of sacred literature down to its close? or shall we begin at the end, and work backwards? For several reasons, which need not now be gone into, the last is the most desirable process. It is best always to proceed from the known to the unknown. Again, shall we begin by discussing these Books from a literary point of view, or from a historical? In other words, shall we investigate the literary position of the Books themselves first, or shall we proceed at once to discuss their contents? It will be best to let the literary precede the historical, at least up to a certain point; we must get some rough impression of the age, integrity, and trustworthiness of the latest Books which we are going to take as our basis of operations, before we deal fully with their contents. At the same time we shall soon see that the literary and the historical elements of criticism act and react on one another; and the proved substantial accuracy (or inaccuracy) of the history would materially affect our view of the Books which contain it.

It should be added that in dealing with the Collection of Books (Historical, Prophetic, and Poetic) which make up the Hebrew Canon, we ought not to isolate it more than is absolutely necessary. Quite the contrary; we must do our utmost to associate it with its nearest literary neighbours; and we must adopt methods and rules of criticism which are applicable to other

Literary
should
precede
historical
criticism.

The Books
of Scripture
not to be
isolated.

books of the same age and class—so far as we can find them.

3. THE OLD TESTAMENT TRACED BACK TO OUR LORD'S TIME.

The Hebrew Bible traced back to the Soncino Edition.

Hebrew MSS.
900 A.D.

MSS. in the time of Christ.

We start, then, from to-day. Here, says the critic, is my Hebrew Bible. I can trace it back from edition to edition, till I reach the Soncino Edition of A.D. 1488. I can travel back a few centuries further by the aid of certain MSS.—though they do not help me, either as regards age or number, a quarter so much as Greek MSS. would help me if I were pursuing a similar investigation into the claims of the Greek Testament. Accordingly I find myself taken back by certain old Hebrew MSS. to, perhaps, 900 A.D., and I am compelled to jump backwards over another nine centuries to find the ancient representatives of these MSS., as they existed in the synagogues and in the libraries of the learned in the time of Christ. It cannot be concealed that this literary jump is a very serious matter, and that we must give a reason which shall justify us in taking it; but the reason is forthcoming. Through the whole period which intervenes between the oldest Hebrew MSS. of the Old Testament and the time of Christ there are literary sign-posts, in the form of references, quotations, extracts, lists of Books, and Versions, which assure us that we are in the right

track. This can be verified by any elementary work on the Canon of the Old Testament.

The most noteworthy resting-place for the student in travelling back over those early nine centuries is the celebrated “School of Tiberias.” This was a place of Rabbinical learning, founded by Simon ben Gamaliel, of the house of Hillel, in the latter part of the 2nd century after Christ. It became a flourishing centre of Judaism. A Sanhedrim was formed there, and it was recognised as an authority amongst all Western Jews, though the Babylonian or Parthian Jews never wholly submitted to its yoke. Various Rabbis of note succeeded to the Jewish patriarchate. To this school we owe what is called the *Masorah*.¹ It was made the special business of this school to examine all extant Biblical MSS. which had any authority, to compare or collate them, to harmonise the divisions into sections and verses, counting the verses in each book, and even the letters, and to put occasional marks and notes pointing out peculiarities in the text. This work was completed in the 6th century A.D. Meanwhile, the Eastern Jews had in a great measure kept aloof, and the consequence was that the Babylonian recension of the Old Testament did not absolutely agree with the Western. In the 11th century these two recen-

The
School of
Tiberias.

The
origin of the
Masorah.

Completion
of the
work.

¹ The word is derived from *Masar*, to deliver, so that it answers to the word Tradition.

Comparison
of Baby-
lonian with
the Western
recension.

sions were formally collated by Aaron ben Asher of Tiberias and Jacob ben Naphtali, a president of one of the Babylonian schools ; and it was found that through the whole Old Testament there were only two hundred differences in letters, none of which involved a material difference in signification.¹

The school
of Jamnia.

There was yet an earlier school than that of Tiberias, viz., the school of Jamnia. This place was near Mount Carmel, and was the first rendezvous of the Rabbis after the destruction of Jerusalem. The first President of the Jewish body here was Gamaliel II., the son of Simon. His life had been spared by Titus when Jerusalem fell. He was a man of great power and influence, and rabbinism thrrove under him. The transcription of Biblical MSS. was one of the things carried on in this school, and the system of punctuating the text, so as to perpetuate the traditional pronunciation and intonation, probably began here.

4. THE SCRIPTURES IN USE IN OUR LORD'S TIME.

The same
Scriptures
held by
Jews and
Christians
in the time
of Christ.

We now have to get further back, and we will imagine that we are educated Jews living in the time of Christ. We possess what were called in those days “the sacred Scriptures.” Are they the same, in number and contents, as those which have travelled down to this 19th century ?

¹ See Etheridge's *History of Hebrew Literature*, p. 203, also Walton's 8th *Prolegomenon to his Polyglot Bible*.

Common sense answers, Yes ; and on the following ground : Here are two contending parties, Jews and Christians, or, we may say, non-Christian Jews and Christian Jews ; they diverge on one main question, which is this : "Is Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah ?" The Christians affirm that He is the Messiah, and prove it from the Jewish Scriptures ; the non-Christian Jews hold out against the proof, for reasons which we need not go into ; meanwhile, both parties hold the same Old Testament Scriptures, and draw from them their first conception of a Messiah ; and to this day there is not a single word in which an ordinary European Jew's Hebrew Bible differs from one published by the British and Foreign Bible Society for the use of the Christian student.

This rational line of argument might be confirmed by the study of the Masorah, *i.e.*, the collection of notes and materials which were accumulated by the school of Tiberias in the course of its critical labours. It is now attainable in a fairly manageable form, thanks to the toil of Dr. Ginsburg ; and it will be found to contain an unwieldy mass of references to texts, approximating to our idea of a Concordance ; but even now it is practically out of the reach of most students. But the conclusion we have come to, that our Old Testament is substantially the same as that which was in use in our Lord's time, can be more

Our Bible
the same as
in Christ's
time.

Confirma-
tion derived
from the
study of the
Masorah.

The
use of
the Old
Testament
by the first
Christian
teachers
and writers.

Quotations
from a Book
prove its
pre-exist-
ence.

safely and simply verified by a careful scrutiny of the use made of the Old Testament by the first Christian teachers and writers, amongst whom we refer especially to the writers of the New Testament. Thus, putting aside verbal resemblances, there are about 600 quotations, formal or informal, of the Old Testament in the New. In spite of well-known variations of text, and in spite of the fact that the New Testament is in Greek and is strongly tinctured by the Septuagint, the parentage of these quotations is in almost every case easily recognisable in our Hebrew Bible. Now it is a recognised canon of criticism that extracts from a Book imply the pre-existence of the Book, unless there is any known reason to the contrary. Consequently it may now safely be affirmed that while Christianity rests on arguments taken from the Jewish Scriptures, the Christian Books prove by their use of these earlier Scriptures that the Hebrew Canon must have been substantially the same as it is now. Additional arguments to fortify this conclusion may be drawn from Josephus, Philo, and other Jewish and Christian writers who lived in or about that age.

5. THE SCRIPTURES TRACED BACK TO NEHEMIAH'S TIME.

We still have to get back from the Christian era, *i.e.*, the age of the Herods, to the reign of

Artaxerxes, in which the closing historical Books of the Old Testament were apparently written. What help can we get whilst we attempt to cross this period of 400 years?

The interval between the age of the Herods and the reign of Artaxerxes.

(a) We have no longer two large contemporary but divergent bodies like Jews and Christians ; but there were different sects within the Jewish community, *e.g.*, the Pharisees and Sadducees, and some of the points on which they differed imply the then existence of the Sacred Books. This may be illustrated from Josephus's account of the Jewish sects.¹

Jewish sects.

(b) We have the Greek Septuagint version (Lxx). This remarkable work was the first effort to represent the Sacred Books of the East in the languages of the West. Its authors certainly had our Hebrew Scriptures before them, though they felt at liberty to incorporate with these canonical books other writings of uncertain origin and authority.

The Septuagint.

(c) We have the Chaldee versions (Targums). These are of varying dates and character ; but they imply the earlier existence of the Hebrew Old Testament, and that in a purer or older dialect, which had dropped out of ordinary use in the East.

The Targums.

These three sets of materials put together may secure the substantial integrity of the Old Testament as far back as perhaps 200 B.C., or possibly

The Old Testament
200 B.C.

¹ See Jos., *Ant.* 13. 10. 6, on the contrast between tradition and the written law, and the references in the Maccabees to the "Assideans," or Chasidim.

250 b.c. Still there is a gulf between either of these dates and the era of Nehemiah (444–420 b.c.). How is it to be bridged over? The answer—probably the only answer from external sources—is, “By Tradition.” We are now forsaken by contemporary Jewish literature, and there is little else to which we can appeal; our business, then, is to estimate the value of this tradition. There are stepping-stones, however, even here, in these “dark ages” of the Jewish Church. We may trace a line of *Sopherim*, or Scribes, all the way up from the days of Christ to the days of Nehemiah. Every Jewish Prayer-book contains a treatise called *Pirke Aboth* (ethics of the Fathers), containing the wise sayings of the sages through all that period. Now, Simon the Just, Antigonus of Socho, and the rest named in this interesting book, are not mere names. They were living teachers, and they handed down what they had received.¹

The testimony of tradition between time of Nehemiah and 200 b.c.

The *Pirke Aboth*.

The testimony of Ecclesiasticus.

Again, the apocryphal Book called *Ecclesiasticus* contains a preface by the son of Sirach, in which he refers to “the law, the prophets, and the other Books of our Fathers,” three times over, in a way which implies that they were regarded in his days as a sacred deposit; while the list of prophetic men given in the later chapters of his book, begins with Enoch and ends with Nehemiah.

¹ Etheridge's *History of Jewish Literature*.

The testimony of the Books of the Maccabees may be added as tending to show that the Books of the Old Testament were regarded as a sacred collection made long before, and as having been handed down from the age of Nehemiah. The prophets were regarded by the Maccabees as men in the far past, and the law as something to fight for and die for. "We have," said Jonathan, b.c. 144, "the Holy Books of Scripture in our hands to comfort us."¹ This was not the utterance of a private man, but an official utterance in the name of the elders, priests, and people, who evidently held their Scriptures as we hold ours.²

The
testimony
of the
Books of the
Maccabees.

6. JEWISH TRADITION ESTIMATED.

Our estimate of the value of these and numerous other references in the Apocrypha to the Old Testament Scriptures lies not in their date, for they are not early enough to add force to what has gone before. It rather lies in the proofs they afford that these Books were regarded as sacred, prophetic, and authoritative, and were evidently read as such both privately and publicly within one or two centuries of the death of Nehemiah.

The
value of the
testimony
of the
Apocrypha
to the Old
Testament
Scriptures.

Of course a book may be held sacred, and yet may be a forgery; but when a "library" is held

¹ 1 Mac. xii. 9.

² See 1 Mac. xii. 9; comp. 2 Mac. ii. 13, on Nehemiah's work in putting together the "library" of the Old Testament.

to be sacred from a period known to be within two centuries of the date of its completion, if not earlier, the case becomes very strong. If these Books have been held as Scriptures and as authoritative from an age not very distant from Nehemiah—say from the age of Alexander the Great—the difficulty of supposing that they have been materially tampered with becomes considerable.

The signal failure of the Alexandrian interpreters to get the Apocryphal parts of the Greek Septuagint Version inserted into the Jewish canon is illustrative of this point.

Nor must it be forgotten that the Books are *Jewish*. This has a twofold bearing. First, the Jews, if bad philosophers, are good chroniclers; they are gifted with extraordinary memories and powers of reproducing what they have heard. Eastern writers copy, but do not alter. “We in the West,” says Robertson Smith, “have little idea of the precision with which an Eastern pupil even now can take up and remember the minutest details of a lesson, reproducing them years afterwards in the exact words of his master.” Secondly, the Jews are of all peoples the most stubborn and tenacious in matters of religious opinion. They were not the people to let any document lightly enter their canon. No Book which could not be vouched for as “prophetic” would be regarded by them as sacred and authori-

Difficulty of
believing
the Old
Testament
Scriptures
to have been
tampered
with.

The Old
Testament
Books
Jewish.

The
religious
tenacity
of the Jews.

tative. It is not necessary for our present purpose to discuss the technical meaning of this word "prophetic," but at any rate it carried with it the idea of a Divine commission having been given to the writers; and a work produced by a prophet was as such binding on the national conscience. The Books of the Law which Antiochus Epiphanes was so anxious to destroy,¹ and the rest of the Books associated with them were regarded as a sacred deposit by the most stubborn, tough, tenacious, long-lived nation in the world, and were revered through an undying succession of teachers as the Word of God.

Such are, in brief, the literary grounds, apart from all internal considerations, on which we may regard the Books of the Old Testament as having come down from the time of Nehemiah substantially as we have them, both as to number and contents. Of course it is unfortunate that we have no contemporary vouchers for them, and that we have been compelled to rest to so great an extent on tradition. But it is no literary sin to fall back on tradition. We have to do it for most authorship, secular as well as sacred. Juvenal, for example, was never named as an author till 268 years after his death, and the case of Thucydides was nearly the same; yet we accept the books which go by their names without hesitation.²

The prophetic character of the Old Testament Books.

Absence of contemporary vouchers does not invalidate the trustworthiness of the books.

¹ 1 Mac. i. 57.

² See *The Antiquity and Genuineness of the Gospels* (Allen),

Dependence
of history on
tradition.

History is, to a large extent, well-attested tradition; and the farther we go back the more we must depend on oral tradition and internal evidence, while gratefully clutching at every stray illustration and confirmation which we can obtain from external sources.

7. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCRIPTURES CIRCA 400 B.C.

We will now imagine that we are Jews living in the age of Nehemiah, say about 400 b.c., that we have access to "the Sacred Scriptures" in the Temple archives, and that we find them in the main the same as what we have in our extant Hebrew Old Testament. Our work now must be entirely internal and critical, though we must never give up the literary basis of operations which we have secured.

The
Scriptures
not one
book, but
many.

(a) The first thing which strikes us about these Scriptures is that they are not *one* book, but *many*. This is an enormous advantage from a literary point of view. It may be compared with the fact that there are many strata beneath our feet, and that these have been deposited in a definite order, and also that some time has elapsed between one deposit and another. Conceive that the case had been otherwise. Let us imagine that the whole

pp. 35-56, on the literary attestations to ancient authors. See also the work by the late Mr. Isaac Taylor on *The Transmission of Ancient Books*.

Old Testament had been written by a Jewish Herodotus in twenty-two Books (according to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet); how little opportunity we should have had of pushing back our literary researches much behind the age of the supposed historian or compiler—say it was Herodotus' contemporary, Nehemiah. Fortunately, this is not our case. We hold the works not of one writer but of many, who were diverse in age, rank, and style, though one in spirit, and linked with one another by numerous literary bonds.

*The advantage
of this fact.*

It would be helpful if we knew for certain at this point not only the character in which these ancient documents were written, but also the form of the books and the methods of fastening them together. If the Pentateuch was in the Roll form in the days of Nehemiah, as it seems to have been in the period of the Maccabees, some important considerations bearing on its integrity would ensue. Thus, it would not be easy to insert notes or additions into a roll; nor could the order of the books be altered. But this question we must leave unanswered.

(b) The next thing that strikes us, after a most cursory survey of the literature before us, is that it is *not all of one class*. (i) There is the directly historical, including the legislative. (ii) There are the collections of hymns and proverbs, the one illustrating the popular history, and the other con-

*The Books
of Scripture
not all of
one class.*

densing into terse sentences the spirit of the Mosaic legislation. (iii) There are the books of the Prophets, partly predictive, partly hortative or homiletic, and abounding in vivid touches illustrating the national life, manners, and religion of their age. Here again the literary gain is very great, because the different classes of literature illustrate each other in so many ways.

Their
national
character.

(c) We next observe that there runs through these writings a marked *national* element. The Books are "Israelite indeed," and they have in them "no guile." They are the records of a nation possessed of a strange history and with precious memories, and whose face is more marred than that of any other nation. The Books cannot exactly be called patriotic, still less political, still less are they Government records; but they are that portion of the national history and literature which was composed with a practical and religious intent. The secular literature of Israel has perished: the religious has been preserved.

The Tribal
element in
the books of
Scripture.

(d) Alongside of and springing out of this national element in the Books is the *Tribal*. The Tribes were Clans. Each had its special history, its traditional prospects, its set location, its celebrated men. Tribal experiences and inter-tribal feuds furnish much historic detail, and supply the prophets with many a moral which would go home to the hearts of the hearers and

readers. These Twelve Tribes are the twelve pillars of Old Testament history.

(e) It will be observed that the historical books, and in a measure the prophetic also, are crowded with *proper names*. These give life, reality, and freshness to the pages of history. The persons whom they represent live and move; they are not painted to order, like the ancestors of some *novus homo*. They hold conversations with one another, and it is, thanks to these numberless little dialogues, that we get our knowledge of old colloquial Hebrew, with its dignity, brevity, humour, and irony.

These proper names are further interesting from a literary point of view—(i) because they all have a meaning, and that usually a religious one; (ii) because they are generally composite words, being almost the only composite words there are in the old Hebrew language; (iii) because they frequently retain old grammatical forms, *e.g.*, the *i* in Melchizedec, and old roots, *e.g.*, the root *raham* in the name of Abraham,—a root which does not occur elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible; (iv) because the same name is often spelt and must sometimes have been pronounced in different ways—a fact of importance to the student of the Hebrew text for more reasons than one, illustrating as it does the provincialisms and the editorial work of the most ancient times.

Proper
names in
the books.

The
proper
names have
usually a
religious
meaning.

The numerous genealogies in the Books.

(f) The Books abound with *Genealogies*. In this, as in so many other respects, they are unique. Sometimes persons come on the scene of the Old Testament with nothing to identify them but their own name. Others are traced back through one generation, or two, as Elisha the son of Shaphat, Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi. Occasionally men trace themselves back to some known persons, see, *e.g.*, the accounts which Ezra and Zephaniah give of their own ancestry. But besides these methods of identification, of which the instances are legion, we are constantly coming across genealogies which go through many generations. These were of great importance at the time, because of their bearing on land tenure. A genealogy was a title to an estate. They are also of considerable literary interest to us, for if history is the framework of Biblical theology, these genealogies are the vertebræ of the history. They take us back step by step from the days of Nehemiah to the Exodus, and still further back to the patriarchal age; nay, we find ourselves led back by this means to the fountain head of human history, so far as the Old Testament gives it us, in the person of Adam.

The official element in the Books of Scripture.

(g) It may be added that there is a strong *official* element running through these Books. The Levitical and priestly offices, the judicial and magisterial, the musical and choral, were largely

in the hands of certain families, and the fact of their being to a great extent hereditary adds another element to the historical stability of the Books. Apart from the sacred officialism of the Mosaic system there were great administrative arrangements set on foot by David and Solomon ; and these, too, in some degree, reappear in the later Books.

(h) Another noteworthy element in the Books is the fact that they give evidence of a *chronological system* in Israelite history. There is no one fixed era in the most ancient known histories, and all we can expect to find in the earliest Biblical narratives, is what we do find, viz., a chain of dates connected with a series of individuals, such as the antediluvian heroes, and a more developed network of dates connected with family life in the patriarchal age. And it is worth while to notice that whilst the glimpses of patriarchal life which we obtain from Genesis are very much in the way of family memoranda, which do not profess to be based on a chronological scheme, yet as a matter of fact they all fit together, having the harmoniousness of truth. The later Books develop something more of a national chronological scheme, starting from the Exodus, and ending with the building of Solomon's temple ; then comes a regal calendar which has its difficulties in detail, but is very clear as to its main outline ; and at the

The chronological system in Israelitish history.

Dates connected with individuals.

Chronological harmony of the glimpses of Patriarchal life in Genesis.

National scheme in later Books.

close of the kingly period we find Jewish dates fixed—for the first time—with reference to secular dates, *i.e.*, the regnal dates of the Babylonian and (subsequently) the Persian kings. It is not the object of this Tract to deal with peculiarities of reckoning days, years, or generations (which last were probably centuries in the patriarchal period, and forties in the time of the Judges); the aim is rather to point out what a help Biblical Chronology is to us in verifying and arranging the numerous historical materials presented to us in the Old Testament. What should we do without it? What other collection of ancient and miscellaneous national documents supplies such keys to the historiographer?

The
use of
Biblical
chronology
in Old
Testament
study.

The
scenes of
many events
in history
described in
Scripture.

(i) The *topographical* element in the Books next demands our attention. The Hebrew Bible not only contains crowds of names of places, but also describes the scenes of many events, if not formally, yet by the use of particular pictorial expressions, in which the Hebrew language is remarkably rich. There are in Palestine and Egypt different kinds of valleys, rivers, fountains, rocks, and hills, and each has its appointed name. There were strange landmarks, such as trees, stones, declivities; there were peculiar objects associated with religious and other customs, such as cromlechs, menhirs, "places," heights, "groves;" there are meteorological and other physical characteristics

connected with peculiarities of the region, combining, as it does, perpetual snow with tropical fauna and flora. There are peculiar phenomena connected with the river Jordan ; all these things play their part in the Books. The most careful scrutiny and survey of the land has shown that the Scripture, speaking topographically, is exactly in harmony with the facts, and may be taken as the best handbook to Palestine.¹

Still, it might be replied, there are great differences of opinion amongst the learned on some topographical points, *e.g.*, with respect to Mount Zion and the plan of Jerusalem generally. That is true ; and to what is it owing ? Not necessarily to the ignorance of the sacred writers, but possibly to their familiarity with the spots and persons about which they are writing. Witness the striking fact that in the Pentateuch neither the city of Pharaoh nor the river is named. We learn the one almost accidentally from a casual expression in the Psalms, and we gather our idea of the other partly from the Hebrew word used, partly from the narrative preceding the Exodus. Suffice it, at any rate, to say that the more thoroughly Bible lands have been explored, the stronger is their evidence to the veracity and pictorial accuracy of the Old Testament.

Scripture
topography
in exact
harmony
with the
facts.

The
source of
topo-
graphical
difficulties
explained.

¹ See Introduction to Conder's *Tentwork in Palestine*,

8. THE SACRED HISTORY CONFIRMED.

We have thus specified nine elements in the Sacred Books of the Jews as they stood about 400 b.c., viz., their multiplicity and variety, their national, tribal, and personal interests, their genealogical, official, chronological, and topographical characteristics. Now, these things are just the class of phenomena in any literature which give it reality and stamp it as trustworthy. As we look down the long vista of narrative, hedged in as it ever is with prophecy and poetry, and reaching back from the comparatively modern period of Nehemiah to the patriarchal and pre-patriarchal ages, we feel that we are dealing, not with myths, legends, or old wives' fables, but with solid historical realities.

We may now subject the historical contents of the Books to some further analysis in order to see how far they can be tested and substantiated.

The history of Israel, as contained in these Books, is of two kinds: one branch is internal, and has a strong theological element running through it; the other exhibits the relations between Israel and other nations.

It is manifest that the first of these cannot be tested from external sources. All that we can look for is that the various accounts should fit in together, and be in the main consistent. The

The trustworthiness of the phenomena found in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Two kinds of history in Scripture.

Notes of trustworthiness.

more harmonious the various writers are in their narratives—especially if these harmonies are of the nature of “undesigned” coincidences—the more trustworthy the history is. Here is one of the great advantages of the work proceeding from different hands and ages.

An instance or two may be given to illustrate ^{Casual co-incidences,} these casual coincidences in the Historical Books.

In Judges ix. 6 we read as follows: “And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went and made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem.” The reader will observe that the locality where Abimelech was crowned or anointed is exactly designated. Why so? Was the spot well known? Had anything happened there already? In the margin of our Bibles we read “by the oak of the pillar,” instead of “by the plain of the pillar,” and a reference is given to Josh. xxiv. 26. Here we read that Joshua made a covenant with the people in Shechem, and wrote certain words in the book of the law of God, and then took a great stone, “and set it up there under an oak” that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. The Hebrew word translated *oak* in Joshua is translated *plain* in Judges, and the earlier book gives us the earlier history of “the oak of the pillar.”

The
“oak of the
pillar” and
“the plain
of the
pillar.”

Again, in 1 Sam. xv. 2 we read, “Thus saith ^{The judgment of} the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek

did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt." The reference here is to Ex. xvii. 8. The event had happened hundreds of years before; but the memory of the Eternal is not affected by time. Still it was necessary for Israel also to remember about Amalek, as they had to inflict God's judgment on the people, and it may be asked, How was the memory of Amalek's cowardly attack to be kept alive in the hearts of the people? The answer lies in Ex. xvii. 14, where we read that the Lord said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in a book (or, in the book), and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." This passage is peculiarly interesting to us because it is the first direction given to Moses to write. Saul and the people of his days must have known what was written; and thus the earlier narrative gives the needful explanation of the later.

The
blotting out
of the re-
membrance
of Amalek.

Once more, in Neh. xiii. 1, 2, we are told that the Levites "read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever; because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing." Let the student turn to

Deut. xxiii. 3–5 in Hebrew or in English, and he will find the passage there verbatim, in its place amidst a series of other prohibitions, and he must look further into the history for the circumstances which gave occasion to it.

Two additional observations may be made before we pass on from the internal history of the people. One is that we possess in the Old Testament a number of speeches and psalms in which some of the leading events of Israel's history are briefly and succinctly referred to, the 9th of Nehemiah being a notable instance. The other is, that we possess duplicate accounts of considerable parts of the history of Israel, as we have a fourfold account of our Lord's life. For example, the speeches in Deuteronomy may be laid alongside of the history in Exodus and Numbers, and the Chronicles may be laid alongside the Kings. Thus we are better off than if the history of Israel were left hanging on a single thread of narrative.

But the second class of historical narrative can be brought to the test in some measure by external means. Owing to the fact that the countries with which Israel mainly had to do were Chaldæa, Egypt, Syria, Assyria, the later Chaldæan empire, and finally Persia, it becomes possible to compare the numerous though somewhat casual statements concerning these nations, which the Old Testament contains, with the

Speeches
and Psalms
referring to
historical
events.

External
relations
of Israel.

inscriptions on rock and clay, in palace and temple, which have been brought to light in the course of this century.

Secular references in the Old Testament.

Now, if it could be shown that the secular references in the Old Testament were unable to stand this test, the position of the student (who has already had so many proofs that the Books are to be trusted) would be a very perplexing one. But if, on the contrary, these secular references are in the main proved to be accurate and historical, and not mythical, then the gain is very great ; for the trustworthiness of the writers is so far established thereby ; and if they are trustworthy when dealing with things external, there is equal reason to trust them when they relate the internal history of their own nation. What then is the verdict of historical students on this point ? It is unanimous that in the main the references to external history in the Old Testament are trustworthy.¹

Dr. Schrader's investigations.

Perhaps the most striking testimony is to be obtained from the writings of Dr. Schrader, the Professor of Oriental languages in the University of Berlin.² Dr. Schrader is what the ordinary

¹ See Rawlinson's *Historical Illustrations* (S.P.C.K.), Sayce's *Fresh Light* and his *Witness of Ancient Monuments to the Old Testament Scriptures* (R.T.S.), and Budge's *Babylonian History* (R.T.S.), also *Records of the Past*, and the publications of the Biblical Archaeology Society.

² An English translation of this work, based on Dr. Schrader's second edition, has been published by Williams & Norgate.

English student would call "free" in his ideas about the inspiration and compilation of the sacred books, but this makes his testimony all the more valuable. His method is to follow straight through the Old Testament, noting every verse and sometimes every word which can be illustrated by a wide and careful study of the cuneiform inscriptions. The result is that whether our attention is directed to the pre-Mosaic period, which includes the narrative of the Creation, the Deluge, Babel, the dispersion, and the invasion of the cities of the plain, or whether we are studying the later histories, we find illustrations of the historical value of the sacred narratives at every turn.

Such are the kinds of attestation with which God in His providence has provided the student of Biblical history; and we may now take in our hands these ancient documents with renewed trust and reverence, in order that we may investigate their contents somewhat more narrowly. We find them to be but a bare outline, taking us from the dawn of history to the Patriarchs, thence to the Egyptian period, thence through the wilderness to Canaan; at length we reach the period of the Kings, and the break up of the kingdom into two; then follow the two captivities and the return. It is a long, pathetic story, but after all it is but a selection; we have only stepping-stones, salient points, intended to illustrate certain great principles,

The ample
attestation
of the
historical
value of the
sacred
narratives.

Biblical
history a
bare outline
of events
from the
dawn of
history

and those not primarily political, but moral and theological.

The
theology
of the books
cannot be
disentangled
from the
history.

It is impossible to disentangle the history contained in these books from their theology. Few tasks are more instructive than to take such a book as Joshua, Judges, or the 1st of Samuel, and ask oneself the question, what does this book teach me about God, and about the way of righteousness? The tone of the sacred writings is pure and bracing; it is like mountain air; it is from above, not from beneath; and this is recognised by many who cannot see their way to acknowledge the full historical authority of the books.

The
moral and
theological
element
comes out
most
strongly in
the poetry
and
prophecy.

The moral and theological element in the Old Testament comes out all the more strongly when we turn to the other two departments of the Old Testament, viz., its poetry and prophecy. Each of these is entwined with the history. Let anyone read attentively the prophecy of Jacob (Gen. xlix.), the song of Moses (Exod. xv.), or the song of Israel (Deut. xxxii.), and he will see that it is so. National songs are a most valuable part of literature. What shall we say to the songs of Israel which are contained in the Book of Psalms? It may not be possible to fix the date, authorship, or occasion of each one of them, but many of them tell their own tale, and the rest are precious for the devotional spirit that inspires them.¹

¹ See Fausset's *Studies in the CL. Psalms*, for illustration

Turning to the Prophets, they are to the history in the Old Testament what St. Paul's Epistles are to the Acts, and they may be studied in this connection quite apart from the predictive element in them. But if they are found to be historical, real, living, practical, and helpful, in their non-predictive parts, this fact will throw a strong light on the predictive element which runs through them. No historical student or man of letters, as such, can shut his eyes to the value of these prophetic writings as confirmatory of the history and as illustrative of the internal condition and character of Israel at some very critical stages of their course.

The undesigned or casual coincidences between the Prophets and the historians of the Old Testament are manifold. Thus Amos tells us that he prophesied in the reign of Uzziah, two years before the earthquake. Strange to say, the Historical Books do not refer to this earthquake; but there is a casual reference to it in Zechariah xiv. 5, where we read, "Ye shall flee like as ye fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah the king of Judah."

In Amos i. 3 a punishment is denounced on Damascus because the Syrians had threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron. If we turn to 2 Kings xiii. 7 we read that the king of Syria had

The relation of
the Prophets
to the
history.

Manifold
coincidences
between the
Prophets
and the
historians.

Denuncia-
tion of
judgment on
Damascus.

of the striking coincidences between this precious part of Scripture and the Historical Books.

destroyed the troops of Jehoahaz, “and made them like the dust by threshing.” The Hebrew word, translated “thresh,” is the same in both cases.

Prophecy concerning Zion and Jerusalem.

In Micah iii. 12 we read, “Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.” Many years afterwards this prophecy was brought to mind and quoted, for we read in Jer. xxvi. 18 that when the life of Jeremiah was in danger there rose up certain of the elders of the people, saying, “Micah, the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Zion shall be ploughed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.” Having cited the passage, the elders proceed to comment on it. This illustrates the notoriety which prophets and their utterances obtained in early days.

Historical books anonymous.

Prophetic Books give authors' names.

It is noteworthy that whilst the Historical Books of the Bible are chiefly anonymous, though based on material, the source of which is frequently mentioned,¹ the case is otherwise with the Prophets. None of the Prophetical Books are anonymous. It seems to have been considered a duty on the part of each prophetic writer to open his Book with his own name. Compare in this respect the Epistles in the New Testament.

¹ e.g., 1 Chron. xxix, 29.

9. DIFFICULTIES IN INDIVIDUAL BOOKS.

By such processes as have now been sketched out, the conviction has been arrived at by the great mass of students, that the "library" contained in the Old Testament, and closed in the days of Nehemiah, is in the main what it professes to be, and may be trusted accordingly. But when we come to the discussion of individual Books, their text, composition, date, and authorship, great difficulties arise, chiefly from the entire absence of contemporary literature. Critical skill and practical common sense come to the aid of the student to some extent, but many questions will be left open or will be decided in different ways according to the critic's willingness to take much or little for granted.

The substantial trustworthiness of the Books as a whole being allowed on the grounds already discussed, it seems to follow that each Book should be taken on its own profession as the veritable work of some prophetic man or men of a definite age, unless there are very strong reasons to the contrary. We do not expect historians to be perpetually showing their credentials, nor can we expect attestations for each single event or prophecy. The greater contains the less. We are content to accept the less, because we see reason to accept the greater; and we receive the details in a history because we trust the historian. This

Trust-worthiness
of the Old
Testament.

Difficulties
relating to
individual
Books.

Each Book
to be taken
on its own
profession.

is one of the first canons of historical evidence, and on the strength of it we are enabled to read with sufficient confidence the myriads of "unproved" facts which make up the history of the past, whether secular or sacred.

Linguistic considerations.

Still, whilst recognising the scantiness of our materials, it remains for us to criticise the language, date, and authorship of these Books one by one, and that not only from a historical, but also from a linguistic or literary point of view, examining whether the phenomena which they present answer to what they say of themselves. It is to this that we must now direct the reader's careful attention.

Biblical Hebrew unique.

It might be thought that the language of each Book would decide its date. But is it so? Let us see how the case stands? Biblical Hebrew stands alone. Although Hebrew is a member of a sufficiently large family, and although some of its near relatives are still living languages, yet after the days in which the Old Testament was completed, this particular stamp of language perished, and became to its later representatives what Sanscrit is to some of the languages of India. Its origin is as much a perplexity as its end. It comes on the scene almost like Melchizedee, and passes away as abruptly as he did.

10. CHARACTERISTICS OF HEBREW.—UNITY OF THE LANGUAGE.

This grand and mysterious language has many noteworthy characteristics into which it is needless here to enter. It is evident, however, that in studying the Hebrew Scriptures we must distinguish between the characteristics of the language as a whole and the peculiarities of individual writers. There are national idiomatic features in Biblical Hebrew which are worthy of deep study ;¹ and there are personal characteristics which make up the style of writers, and which will vary with the age, peculiarities, and circumstances of each. Again, we must distinguish between *lexical* characteristics which have to do with words, and *grammatical* peculiarities which have to do with inflexions or with the structure of sentences. Once more we have to recognise that the same writer may vary in his use of words, and in his way of putting things, at different periods of his life, or under different conditions of feeling, just as a man under strong excitement will bring out native provincialisms which he usually keeps to himself. These constitute the A. B. C. of linguistic criticism. Generally speaking, it is considered that a language in its early condition is pure, and that corruption and mixture are signs of late-

National
and personal
characteris-
tics of
Biblical
Hebrew.

Varying use
of words by
the same
writer.

Primitive
purity of
language.

¹ See Craik on *The Hebrew Language*, and the late Isaac Taylor on *The Spirit of the Hebrew Poetry*.

ness. This, however, will depend on certain things. If a country is isolated, the language remains comparatively unchanged, as in the case of Iceland, which retained pure Danish for hundreds of years, owing to the fact that it was never visited by outsiders. Again, it is usually considered that a language is in a state of flux until it is written; and certainly nothing so tends to fix a language as the publication and reading of religious books in it. This fact might be illustrated at length from the influence of the Lxx., the English Bible, Luther's Bible, and the Koran, on their respective languages; and it is now to be seen in operation in the South Sea Islands.

Unwritten language in a state of flux.

What is the case with Biblical Hebrew? It is, perhaps, presumptuous for one who has not Hebrew blood in him to offer any opinion, but this at least may be safely said: the language at no stage of the Old Testament is in a state of flux. It has its provincialisms, and it has its stages; and deeply interesting they are. It contains considerable passages in a sister dialect, whose exact relationship to Hebrew is still hardly understood. It also contains foreign words, but these are chiefly where the subject specially calls for them: thus we find Egyptianisms at about the period of the Exodus;¹ Moabitisms (or, at any rate, dialectal peculiarities)

¹ Thus, there are seven or eight Egyptian words in one verse in Exodus (ii. 3).

Old Testament Hebrew never in a state of flux.

in Balaam's utterances,¹ and in the Book of Ruth ; Syrianisms (or provincialisms) in the period of Syrian interference with Israel ; Chaldaisms at the time of the Babylonian captivity ; and Persianisms² in the latest period. Occasionally we find what are usually reckoned late words in a document which would otherwise be taken as an early one ; but experience shows us that what seemed at first a late word may simply have been a provincialism, or else a foreign word which had found its way into the national vocabulary in the period of Israel's greatest commercial prosperity—the age of Solomon.

Foreign
words.Provin-
cialisms.

After recognising all these linguistic peculiarities, we return to this point, that Hebrew was in the main in a stationary condition throughout the Old Testament. Experts tell us that the Assyrian language remained in a stationary condition for a thousand years ; it was so, to some extent, apparently with Hebrew. The case is somewhat analogous with that of the basaltic cities of Bashan. So far as one can tell from the condition of the stone, they may have been built yesterday, or in the Roman age, or in the days of Og. Similarly some Hebrew books, so far as style is concerned, and putting aside occasional expressions, may have been written in the days of Malachi, or in those of Hezekiah, or in those of Joshua.

Analogy
between the
Hebrew
language
and the
cities of
Bashan.

¹ It is remarkable that the word translated “curse,” used by Balak, is never used elsewhere in the Bible.

² e.g., the words Satrap and Paradise.

Recognising this marked unity of style and diction in the Hebrew language all through the Bible, some "critics," following an absurd Jewish legend, have suggested that a late writer, say Ezra, Nehemiah, or an unknown successor, re-wrote, "targumised," translated, or (shall we say?) thought out, the whole Old Testament afresh for the benefit of his contemporaries. What! Genealogies, lists, Egyptianisms, minute details, variations, inconsistencies, differences of spelling, all? The thing is an impossibility.

Resemblances between the Hebrew writings.

Putting aside this wild supposition, the conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing remarks, is that the Hebrew writings resemble one another to a very great extent, and that after making due allowance for difference in subject matter, in style of composition, and in poetry as compared with prose, and after allowing for that variety in the use of words which is a characteristic of Oriental languages, there is not so much room as some would expect for determining differences of authorship from language alone.

Linguistic unity illustrated by theological and technical terminology.

The linguistic unity of the Hebrew writers may be illustrated by their theological and technical terminology.¹ Let the student who is willing to investigate this subject start with the usage of the names of God throughout the Old Testament. Let him investigate the terms which express the

¹ See *Synonyms of the Old Testament* (Longmans).

Divine attributes (moral and spiritual), and those which set forth worship, prayer, and praise. Let him proceed to those which characterise the debased condition of man, and which emphasise his needs ; then let him study the words bearing on the various methods of Divine intervention (such as Salvation and Redemption), with which these Books deal so fully. With these he may class words bearing on eschatology, and then pass on to examine the sacrificial terminology of the Bible—so vivid and pictorial in Hebrew, so tame and commonplace in English. Lastly, he may pursue kindred inquiries into the social, political, and legal language of the Books. This is a large undertaking. Few perhaps have faced it ; but the investigation will produce a marked effect on the mind of the student. He will feel, as probably he never felt before, what a marvellous religious and literary oneness there is in these Books. The exceptions, wherever they are to be found, must not be ignored ; but they must not so occupy the mind as to overshadow the substantial conclusion thus attained.

This linguistic unity is not to be wondered at when we remember two things. First, the writers were professedly men not only of one nation, but also of one spiritual stamp, having what may be called a *hereditary prophetic style*. Secondly, they were very much in the habit of using the writings

Examina-
tion of
terms.

Effect on
the student.

Causes of
linguistic
unity.

of their predecessors. Perhaps sufficient attention has never been bestowed on the last point. If the student will take the trouble to underline all the passages in the Hebrew Bible in which one writer has used the work of another, he will come to some interesting conclusions. He will be able to trace the ancestry of historical references in

The
ancestry
of historical
references,

the Prophets to incidents and dialogues fully reported in the History. He will detect hidden relationships between song and narrative, between proverb and precept, between the life of the people and the legislation with which they entered into Canaan. He will find that certain sentences and expressions travel through the Bible, beginning as far back as the days of Abraham, and floating down the stream of time to the age of Nehemiah, having become part of the language, an inheritance of the later ages from the earlier.

Illustrations.

A few illustrations may be offered. We are not surprised to find that when Moses blessed the Twelve Tribes¹ he made a marked reference to Jacob's blessing of Joseph.² But it is more striking to find a verse from the song of Moses,³ quoted *verbatim*, first in the Psalms⁴ and afterwards in Isaiah.⁵ The words are familiar: "The Lord is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation;" and the use made of the words in Isaiah

¹ Deut. xxxiii. ² Gen. xlix. 25, 26. ³ Ex. xv. ⁴ cxviii. 14.
⁵ xii. 2.

is very instructive. Again, when Israel came out of Egypt they were in a critical position, with the enemy behind them and the sea before them; but Moses says, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."¹ Hundreds of years afterwards Jehoshaphat and his people are in an extremity. The grand old words rise in his memory, and he says, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord: fear not, nor be dismayed."² Once more, before the death of Moses he was ordered to teach the Israelites a song which the whole nation was to commit to memory. It is contained in forty-three verses in Deut. xxxii. At least eighteen of these verses are referred to in later Books of the Bible. Lastly, there are two chapters in the Pentateuch full of prophecy concerning the future of Israel, viz., Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii. One or other is referred to, if not verbally quoted, in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Zechariah. These are but a few specimens out of many. The more minutely the text be studied the more clearly it will be seen how intimate is the relationship between the Books, and how diligently each writer had studied the works of his predecessors.

Critical
position of
Israel at
the Red Sea.

The death
song of
Moses.

Prophetic
chapters
in the
Pentateuch.

Later
references
to them.

¹ Ex. xiv. 13.

² 2 Chron. xx. 17.

Diversities
in the
writings of
different
writers.

11. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF WRITERS.

Passing from the unity of language which pervades the Hebrew Scriptures, we have next to study the diversities which may be detected in the writings of different authors. We are here on delicate ground, because what has been advanced in the previous pages tends to reduce to a minimum the diversity between one writer and another. The question to be considered is this :

What classes of diversity are brought to light as we compare writer with writer ?

In spelling.

(a) There are diversities in spelling. These may sometimes be due to corruptions in the text, but they are often owing to some difference in pronunciation in different parts of the country, or in different stages of the language. When, for example, we find the name Jericho spelt invariably one way in the Pentateuch, and another in Joshua, and the name David spelt uniformly one way in Samuel and Kings, and another way in Chronicles, we feel that this is no question of corruption, but a deliberate change. The same is the case, more or less, with many other words, such as Toi and Tou, Hiram and Huram, Araunah and Ornan, Azariah and Uzziah, almug and algum. The more systematically such changes are carried out, the more we may be convinced that they are not of the nature of textual corruption, but are deliberate

Deliberate
changes.

changes. It is possible that some spellings which are usually called late are really provincial. Further research into Oriental remains may throw light on many such points, as it has already cleared up the occasional use of the *r* in the name Nebuchadrezzar and some similar variations.

(b) There are variations in the use of words. This is a large subject, and we must be on our guard against a mistaken method of dealing with it. One writer may frequently be distinguished from another by the introduction of new words for new things; this is a mere accident. Other writers may not have had to mention the things before; for example, a champion is never mentioned till 1 Samuel, and the hunch or hump of a camel is not referred to till Isaiah. The real consideration for critics is this, What inference is to be drawn from the discovery that the same thing has different names? Are we to ignore the phenomenon altogether? or, on the contrary, are we to tie a writer down to the use of one word for one thing? Neither of these courses is legitimate. Thus, to take the word "champion" just mentioned. One expression is used for it in 1 Sam. xvii. 4, 23, and another in the 51st verse. Similarly, in Ezekiel x. 13 there are two distinct words for a "wheel;" in the 42nd of Genesis there are three distinct words for a "sack;" in the account of the deluge three words are trans-

In the use
of words.

The real
considera-
tion for
critics.

The wealth of the Hebrew language.

No argument to be founded on variations in the use of words.

A large induction of instances necessary.

Forms of thought distinguish writers.

lated “window;” and in Job iv. 10 and 11 there are no less than five Hebrew words for a “lion.” The Hebrew language, like Arabic and some other Oriental tongues, is rich in certain classes of words, and we must give the Biblical writers credit for knowing many more words than they used; in fact, we may esteem ourselves fortunate in the fact that they present us with such a variety of words the meanings of which are often shaded off from one another by the most delicate distinctions.¹ It is evident from these considerations that an argument for unity or diversity of authorship must not be made to hang solely or even to a great extent on variations in the use of words. No author must be supposed to have got to the end of his vocabulary in any one book or books which he is known to have written. Consequently a large induction of instances ought to be required before any such argument could be even tolerated; and such an induction is hardly ever attainable.

(c) Authors may more easily be distinguished from one another by their use of certain idioms, by their way of saying and putting things, by the formulæ into which they unconsciously drop, and as we say, by their forms of thought. Expressions such as “Son of man,” and “Ye shall

¹ For instances see *Introduction to Synonyms of the Old Testament* (Longmans).

know that I am the Lord," may often mark a particular prophet; but points of style are proverbially difficult to discuss, and critics will frequently differ in them. The little things which make up a man's style in English are small enough, and in the case of such a restricted language and subject as we have in the Old Testament no one would lightly like to let the question of authorship hang upon so delicate a thread.

Points
of style
difficult to
discuss.

Perhaps these suggestions concerning the value of spelling, words, and style may seem rather discouraging to the keen-sighted critic. They are not meant to discourage criticism, but rather to check certain rash inferences which have been drawn from these phenomena of the text. Whilst, however, too great importance must never be assigned to any one of these three classes of diversity alone, yet if we found the three witnessing in the same direction we should be compelled to attach considerable weight to their converging testimony. In this way we may gradually learn to distinguish author from author—quite apart from other considerations, such as their subject matter and what they say of themselves—yet after all it is in the main upon these last which we have to depend in order that we may fairly estimate the individuality of the respective writers.

Criticism
not
discouraged,
but rash
inferences
to be
avoided.

12. GROUPING OF BOOKS.

The grouping of Books.

Language and contents.

The contents may help to fix the date of a Book but gives no information as to its age.

Passages common to two Books.

It is natural to pass from the study of the characteristics of separate authors to the grouping of Books. These have to be arranged according to their age, and the age of a book can only be decided by its relationship to other books or by its contents. The first of these tests is partly linguistic and partly dependent on the substance of the book. Thus, let us suppose that we have learnt by the processes indicated above that there are several characteristic words, spellings, or inflections in three books and not in others, and that two out of these three are known to be of a late date; we shall then be strongly inclined to believe that the third is late also, unless there is any reason to the contrary. On such grounds as these the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah tend to throw light on the date of the Books of Chronicles. Again, the contents may sometimes help us in fixing the date of a Book which has no definite statements concerning its age. Thus the reference to the destruction of populous No (*i.e.* No-Amon) in Nahum iii. 8, throws almost the only available light on the date of the prophecy.¹

Secondly, if we find a passage common to two Books, we lay the Hebrew side by side in order to

¹ Important light has been thrown on this event by the cuneiform inscriptions.

study their resemblances and differences. These differences may resolve themselves into corruptions of text, but it may be that we have in the one Book later spellings and idioms than in the other. This point is of great importance in comparing certain passages in the first and second chapters of Judges with the parallels in Joshua, and tends to confirm the traditional belief that Joshua is an older Book than Judges.

13. TESTS OF JOINT AUTHORSHIP OF SINGLE BOOKS. DATE OF THE MOSAIC LAW.

The most delicate of all critical questions yet remains. We see in what sense criticism may assist us in distinguishing author from author, and in grouping Books and arranging them chronologically. Can we go a step further? May we detect several hands as having been engaged on one Book? If so, by what tests and within what limits? The answer will partly depend on the nature of the Book.

(a) Some Books are essentially collections of writings, notably, the Psalms and Proverbs. To call these compilations is innocent enough. No one imagines that David wrote all the Psalms, or that Solomon wrote all the Proverbs. The Books tell their own tale. They are compilations; and critics may have a wide scope for diversity of view in dealing with them, though within

Several
hands
engaged on
one Book.

Psalms and
Proverbs.

certain limits fixed partly by the fact that the Books are included in the Old Testament Canon, and partly by the use made (of the Psalms especially) in the New Testament.

(b) Some Books cover a great deal of ground, and yet bear the mark of containing the work of contemporaries. This is the case with the Books of Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra.¹ No one person could have been personally privy to all the things narrated in any one of these Books. Hence we have to analyse them, and to distinguish, so far as criticism permits, between the original annals and the subsequent compilation. The annals travelled down from the age in which the events happened, and were probably the work of scribes, recorders, or prophets. The subsequent compilation was, according to uniform tradition, the work of prophets; and it is on this ground especially that their inspiration and religious authority rest. Much light is thrown on this view by the phenomena exhibited in the Book of Chronicles. Here we have not only large extracts from the Books of Samuel and Kings (or from the materials from which they were composed), but also the names of some of the persons to whom we owe the original materials, such as Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, Iddo, etc. (see e.g., 1 Chron. xxix. 29, and 2 Chron. ix. 29).

Judges,
Samuel,
Kings,
Chronicles
and Ezra.

Original
annals.

Subsequent
compilations.

¹ It is not always noticed that there is a gap of about fifty-seven years between the 6th and 7th chapters of Ezra.

(c) The Book of Genesis covers far more ground than any other Book, and nothing is more legitimate than to apply to it the principles which we thus recognise in these other historical works. We now know from Oriental sources that the art of writing was much older than the age of Abraham, and we can readily understand how authentic records of the past may have been entrusted to him, and how the narrative of God's dealings with his family would gradually accumulate and finally pass into the hands of Moses, whom we take to be the real compiler, or at least the authoriser, of the Book.¹

The ground covered by Genesis.

(d) There remains a large number of Books each of which might have been the *bona fide* work of the person to whom it is attributed in the Old Testament. Under this head may be included the four last Books of the Pentateuch, the Books of Joshua, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah, and some others. At first sight the critic might be inclined to say, These too are compilations; Deuteronomy cannot have been finished by Moses, nor could Joshua have put the last touches to the Book that bears his name, nor can Nehemiah have written some things which are contained in his Book; why, then, should we not say that these and others are all more or less compilations? The answer

Books written by the professed authors.

¹ See Present Day Tract, on *The Mosaic Authorship and Credibility of the Pentateuch*, by the Dean of Canterbury, p. 13.

Difference
from
historical
compilations

is, in the first place, that the Books now under discussion are of a totally different character from the historical compilations already dealt with—and which, as we have seen, are confessedly or necessarily based on old materials. Exodus and Numbers contain the narrative of what happened in the life of the writer to whom the Books are attributed. Leviticus is the record of one month's legislation. Deuteronomy contains a few speeches and songs delivered by the aged leader of Israel in the last days of his life. No one is so unreasonable as to suppose that Moses necessarily wrote these Books with his own hand. He had a little army of scribes and officers, and it was enough for him to select, arrange, and authorise, as he was led by the Spirit of God. Nor need any one imagine that either Moses wrote the account of his own death, or Joshua of his; these additions are simply appendices, and neither they nor the numerous late notes to be found in these and most other Books justify us in regarding them as compilations. It may indeed have been the case that they and all the rest of the Books passed through some process of editorial revision from a later prophetic writer, e.g., Ezra or Nehemiah, but this process does not militate against their substantial integrity.

Possible
editorial
revision.

The “editorial notes” contained in the Books of the Old Testament are usually of very simple

characters, some of them are *topographical*. The ancient names of places dropped out of use, and gave way to modern ones. Thus, in Gen. xiii. 18, we read of "Mamre, which is Hebron." Mamre is never so much as named after the Book of Genesis; hence the need of the note. If Genesis had been a late invention the name Mamre would not have been found in it. Let the student pursue this inquiry into the 14th of Genesis, and let him draw his own conclusions. So in the Book of Joshua we have a selection from what may be called the Doomsday Book of Israel. We read in it such expressions as these, "Luz, which is Bethel," "Kirjath-Baal, which is Kirjath-Jearim," "Jebusi, which is Jerusalem." The old names are thus both preserved and explained. Who would have written Jebusi in later days? The value of such notes will be apparent to every one.

Other notes may be called *monumental*. An instance may be taken from Josh. viii. 28, where we are told that Ai was made "an heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day." It is curious that the word translated "heap" here is "Tell," and the ruin of Ai is still called the "Tell."

A third class of note is literary; e.g., Josh. x. 13, where we read, "Is not this written in the Book of Jasher?" A fourth is ethnological; others are explanatory of old customs, etc. A few are of the nature of appendices which have crept

Topographical notes.

Monumental notes.

Literary notes.

into the text in later days. One such may probably be found in Gen. xxxvi., part of which may have been introduced from the first chapter of the Chronicles; and another may be found in Nehemiah xii., where the list of the priests is carried down to the days of Jaddua.

*Difficulties
in the
Pentateuch.*

*Supposed
legislative
inconsist-
ency.*

*Suggestion
about the
Book of Deu-
teronomy.*

*Characteris-
tics of
Mosaic
legislation.*

Reverting for a moment to the last four Books of the Pentateuch, it ought to be noticed that the difficulty which has been felt about them is not in the main linguistic or critical. It lies chiefly in two suppositions, first, that there is serious inconsistency between the various branches of legislation contained in different parts of these Books, and secondly, that if they had been issued as we now have them the course of the subsequent history between Joshua and the captivity, or at least the record of it, would have been very different from that which is contained in the succeeding historical Books. On such considerations as these it has been suggested that the Book of Deuteronomy was "found" (*i.e.*, invented) in the days of Josiah, and that the Levitical legislation was adopted (*i.e.*, fabricated) in the days of Ezra as a means of insulating the people from the surrounding nations.

Now there is certainly something very extraordinary about the Mosaic legislation. It was issued piecemeal, being mingled with the history—a fact very much in favour of its antiquity—moreover, some of the regulations laid down at

the beginning of the wanderings in the wilderness seem to have been modified just at the end. And possibly we may not always be able to harmonise the earlier with the later legislation.¹ But we must not let our ignorance triumph over our knowledge. It is certain that these Books bear many marks of their having been composed (at least in the main) in the wilderness. A remarkable illustration of this has been pointed out by the eminent naturalist, Dr. Tristram. He has observed that the list of clean and unclean beasts in Deuteronomy xiv. contains no fewer than nine animals which had not been mentioned in the parallel passage in Leviticus. Six of these are animals still to be found in the wilderness and in the Eastern plateau, and could never have been denizens of the hilly, wooded, and cultivated Western Palestine, being inhabitants exclusively either of desert open plains, or of bare rocky heights. Moreover, these animals would have been as impossible an apparition in Egypt as in Palestine. How then should they occur in Deuteronomy and not in Leviticus? Simply because when the Law was given immediately after the Exodus, these denizens of the desert would be unknown forms to the Israelites, whilst when thirty-nine years had been passed in their haunts they would be familiar to all the congregation.

Marks of
composition
in the
wilderness.

List of
clean and
unclean
beasts.

¹ See *The Pentateuch and its Assailants*, by Macdonald.

References
in the later
Scriptures.

Character
of the
Historical
Books.

Difficulties
of suppos-
ing a late
origin of the
Pentateuch.

We have already pointed out that the references in the later Scriptures make us feel sure that the writers had before them some such records as we possess in the Pentateuch. That at least is the impression which they are calculated to produce on the mind of any plain reader. Nor must we ever forget that the Historical Books give us only a very brief outline of Israel's course, and do not refer to feasts, laws, etc., except where the story makes it necessary. It is indeed only too true that the people did not keep the law. Their hearts were hard, and they were constantly relapsing; but they were severely punished for their disobedience. There have been dark ages in Christendom as there were dark ages in Israel, and we must no more infer the non-existence of the Law of Moses through the one period than we can prove the non-existence of the Gospel of Christ in the other. The truth is that the theory of a late origin of these Books creates far more difficulties than it solves. To most minds it would be impossible to conceive that the Book of Exodus was a late invention, when they reflect on the shameful episode concerning the golden calf—imbedded as it is in the heart of the Mosaic law. Nor can one understand the purpose of such an elaborate description of the ark of the Tabernacle, of the ritual and ceremonial connected therewith, and of the exact arrangements for moving from place

to place, with full details and names of persons and localities, if these descriptions first saw daylight when the history of some of them (notably the Tabernacle) was already a story of the past. We ask ourselves whether there ever was a time, except during the wilderness period, in which the Mosaic and Leviticus legislation could possibly have been imposed on Israel; and we ask in vain. We see no marks of a forger, and we see no reason for a forgery. On the contrary, each Book bears testimony to the candour of the writer, and to his honesty of purpose; and the real reason of the ritual is to be found in the New Testament.

In a word, we know of no critical or linguistic arguments which can justify us in disintegrating the Pentateuch in the face of all the plain facts of the case as they stand before us in its vivid pages.

(e) A similar course of argument may be used with reference to such writers as Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah, though there are special difficulties in some of these, particularly in the case of Isaiah. The burden of proof must lie in these cases with the disintegrator, for it is at least conceivable that each writer might have been enabled by God to write the Book that goes by his name. Can various hands be traced in these Books with unerring certainty? can the conjoint testimony of spelling, words, and idioms, be cited to prove that several persons had a hand in composing the

The
wilderness
period the
only possible
date of the
Mosaic and
Leviticus
legislation.

The Books
of Isaiah,
Daniel, and
Zechariah.

Are they of
composite
authorship?

The real
ground of
the proposed
disintegra-
tion.

Books of Isaiah, Daniel, or Zechariah? Or are we driven to this conclusion by an examination of the contents of the Books? It will usually be found that the real ground of proposed disintegration of any individual Book is not linguistic, but something connected with the contents—something hard to be received, which has set men thinking whether, after all, it may not be put aside as an interpolation.

The primary
question
from a
literary
point of
view.

The primary question from a literary point of view is this: Is there in the language of any Book which professedly is the work of one writer anything absolutely inconsistent with unity of authorship? If the Books now under consideration carry with them adequate signs of their substantial integrity, then it would be highly uncritical to condemn them as compilations—not to say forgeries—on the ground of their containing prophecies or other indications of the presence in the writers of a Power higher than their own.

Relation of
theological
to critical
discussions.

Theological questions cannot be altogether kept apart from critical discussions. Still, it is one thing to believe or disbelieve in the living or true God who has spoken at sundry times and in divers manners to the fathers through the prophets. It is another thing to discuss the integrity of ancient books which profess to embody such utterances. This profession must not be disregarded by the critic, when due allowance is made for it, the weight

in favour of the substantial integrity of the Books under consideration (putting aside the possibility of minor interpolations) will be found to be very great. In fact the Books will continue to stand in their integrity, unless far greater critical arguments are discovered than any which have hitherto been forthcoming.

We do not despise these arguments, many of which are regarded as of overwhelming weight by some Christian critics. We do not ignore, for example, the difficulties connected with the latter part of Isaiah, in which the writer is projected into the far future, even the foreground of the prophecy being (at first sight) out of Isaiah's reach. But when we take into account the position and authority of the Book as a whole, as indicated in the first part of this Tract, the richness of Isaiah's mind and vocabulary, as evidenced in his acknowledged writings, the political circumstances of the latter part of his long life, as illustrated by Babylonian discoveries, and above all, the quickening and illuminating influence of God's Holy Spirit, who speaks of things which are not as if they are,¹ we stand firm and hold the Book to be one, and to be the work of the prophet Isaiah.

Weight of argument in favour of the integrity of the Books.

Difficulties connected with the latter part of Isaiah.

The unity of the Book.

¹ Rom. iv. 17.

14. THE WORK THAT REMAINS FOR THE CRITIC.

The work to
be done by
the critic.

The text.

Words and
dialects.

Style.

Ethnology,
archæology,
and com-
parative
religion.

Providence
and
prophecy.

It may be asked in conclusion what work remains for the Old Testament critic? If he is to give up his modern employment of propounding hypotheses concerning the authorship of Books, is not his craft in danger? By no means. First, he has open to him the study of the *text* in the light of MSS. and versions, especially in the light of the repeated passages in the Old Testament, some of which in their later form conserve a better text than is to be found in the earlier.¹ Secondly, there is the study of *words* and *dialects*. This opens a vast and ever-growing field of interest in the light of the Oriental inscriptions which are constantly being brought to light. Thirdly, there is the study of *style*, under which head may be included the figures, transitions, brief hints, proverbial expressions, which so constantly recur in the prophetic writings. Fourthly, there is the study of ethnology, archæology, comparative religion, and the numerous elements of interest which these names awaken. Fifthly, there is the study of providence and prophecy, God's method in dealing and in revealing, and the association of them with subsequent history and with present

¹ The sort of thing referred to may be illustrated by the comparison of the two genealogies of either Samuel or Saul, which are preserved in the Book of Chronicles.

experience. The whole Messianic question follows. It is strange that students should not face more earnestly the Biblical questions on which Christians and Jews diverge. Many other topics suggest themselves, but these at least may keep the Old Testament critic's pen and brain from rusting.

The
Messianic
question.

15. RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION.

Let us recapitulate shortly what has been advanced in this Tract :—

(a) We began by recognising the fact that the Old Testament, as we now have it, is to all intents and purposes the same as it was in the time of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that He stamps it as a whole with His authority, constantly appealing to it and quoting it as "the Scriptures" and "the Word of God."

The Old
Testament
the same as
in our Lord's
time.

(b) We traced these Scriptures back from the time of Christ to that of Nehemiah (B.C. 400), in whose age the canon of the Old Testament seems to have been closed; and we saw there was sufficient reason for believing that the "Library" of Jewish religious books was the same then as now, though doubtless the sacred text suffered much in the course of transcription between the age of Nehemiah and the period when it was issued in its present condition by the Jewish scribes of Tiberias, circ. 500 A.D.

The
Scriptures
traced from
Nehemiah's
time to
Christ's.

(c) We recognised nine literary characteristics

Literary characteristics of the Old Testament.

Casual references.

The character of the prophetic writings.

The age and compilation of certain books.

of the Old Testament which would equally justify a Jew of b.c. 400 or a Christian of a.d. 1900 in believing that the books which make up this Sacred Library are genuine and trustworthy.

(d) We saw that the numerous casual references to external history contained in these books may be illustrated and confirmed from other sources, and that this fact coupled with the plain proofs of the writers' honesty inclines us to accept the whole of their historical records as veracious, unless very strong proofs are forthcoming to the contrary.

(e) We observed that the prophetic writings were not only predictive, but also historic and hortative, bearing the same relation to the history that the Epistles in the New Testament do to the Acts—confirming and being confirmed—and that the historical element in these writings gives great literary weight to the predictive element.

(f) We then passed to a subject which is specially exercising the minds of critics now, and which is of deep interest to all students of God's Word, viz., the question of the age and compilation of certain books. After considering the general characteristics of the Hebrew language and the unity of theological diction which exists beneath the diversity of style in the sacred writers, noting also the fact that we have no contemporary Hebrew literature by which to test the age of each book, we were led to the conclusion that there were not

sufficient grounds for bringing any of the books down from their professed dates, or for dividing up among several authors books which were professedly issued or authorised by one person. This conclusion justifies us in adhering to the Mosaic origin of the four last books of the Pentateuch—*Genesis* being in substance pre-Mosaic—and it encourages us to uphold the literary integrity of such Books as *Isaiah*, *Daniel* and *Zechariah*, unless the evidence of their being compilations is demonstrative.

What shall we say to these things? We invite every reader to ponder over them, and we urge every critic to give them full and fair weight. There are many things we do not know about the compilation and dates and contents of the Old Testament, but there is much that we do know. Mistakes have been made by ancient copyists; notes and interpolations may have found their way into the text in early times; doubts may exist as to the age and authorship of some books, such as *Job*; we may be uncertain as to the historic foreground or occasion of many a psalm and prophecy; and numerous linguistic questions will be battled over till the end of time; but, in spite of all these things, we are manifestly on safe literary ground in taking the Old Testament as it stands, and in using it as Christ and His apostles used it.

The Mosaic
authorship
of the last
four books
of the
Pentateuch.

The literary
integrity
of *Isaiah*,
Daniel, and
Zechariah.

Our
ignorance,
uncertainty
and
mistakes.

The safe
literary
ground.

The Old
Testament
testifies to
Christ.

The mark
of God in it.

Man the
writer.

God
the inspirer.
What it
does and
teaches.

These venerable books have been dragged before the court of modern criticism, but they need not be ashamed ; they can stand the full glare of linguistic and literary daylight. They share the fate of the Christian confessors of old time ; and they share their triumph. They testify to Christ, and Christ testifies to them. They bear the mark of God in their histories, their hymns, their predictions. Man is the writer, using human language, human modes of thought, and often even secular materials ; but God is the Inspirer, and these blessed writings are His lesson books, leading men to feel their need of salvation, keeping up in their hearts from generation to generation a spirit of expectancy, and enabling them to recognise the crucified and risen Jesus as the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

How dear are Thy counsels unto me, O God,
How great is the sum of them.



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